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The Status of the Quality of Democracy in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

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The POLINDEX 2023 study, dated 29th June 2023, has been the subject of a declaration to the Luxembourg Independent Audiovisual Authority (ALIA) under the Law of 14th December 2015 relating to public opinion surveys.

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The Context of the Study

The Political Observatory (POLINDEX) is a socio-political study conducted by the [Chair of Legislative Studies](#) of the University of Luxembourg (<http://chaireparlementaire.uni.lu>), commissioned by the l'Université du Luxembourg, à la demande de la [Chambre des Députés du Luxembourg](#). Its aim is to establish the political and social state of Luxembourg, based on an annual survey carried out by the company [ILRES S.A.](#) in a comparative perspective with other European democracies (Germany, France, Italy and the UK). POLINDEX aims to report on an annual, non-partisan and scientific basis, on possible transformations in the individual and collective values (and their consequences in terms of social cohesion and political legitimacy) of Luxembourg citizens and foreign residents in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The aim is to obtain research results relating to relationships with democracy, institutions, and civil society organizations, and to build up a socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political database on the determinants of voting, political behaviour and social representations, in order to improve decision-making in Luxembourg and Europe. The questionnaire in German, English, French and Luxembourgish is downloadable [POLINDEX 2023 - Luxembourg Independent Audio-visual Authority \(ALIA\)](#).

Theoretical Framework

The questionnaire was constructed according to three fundamental theoretical models in political sociology a) The study of cleavages according to the model of American political scientist Seymour M. LIPSET and Norwegian political scientist Stein ROKKAN¹; b) Individuation according to the model of Swiss analytical psychologist Carl Gustav JUNG²; c) The materialist/post-materialist relationship according to the model of American sociologist Ronald INGLEHART³. More precisely, with economic development, individuals attach less importance to material security and gradually embrace values that emphasize a sense of belonging, individual autonomy, and self-expression. These values spread with the turnover of generations, on the assumption that the basic structure of personality tends to crystallize in youth and change little thereafter. Individuals born into a society of (at least relative) abundance therefore naturally adhere to post-materialist values, and end up taking the place of older, materialistic generations who gradually disappear. This thesis is underpinned by

¹ LIPSET, Seymour Martin et ROKKAN, Stein (ed.). *Party systems and voter alignments: Cross-national perspectives*. New York: Free Press, 1967.

² JUNG, Carl G. *Man and his symbols*. Bantam, 2012.

³ INGLEHART, Ronald. *The silent revolution: Changing values and political styles among Western publics*. Princeton University Press, 2015.

evolutionary optimism. As economic development becomes more widespread, post-materialist values, and with them the democratic values associated with them (since the need for self-expression and individual autonomy are antinomic to political authoritarianism), should spread throughout Western societies.

Moreover, with economic development, individuals would place less importance on material security and gradually adopt values that emphasize the feeling of belonging, individual autonomy and self-expression. These so-called “post-materialist” values would spread with the renewal of generations, based on the principle that the basic structure of the personality tends to crystallize in youth and to evolve little thereafter. Individuals born and living in a society of abundance would adhere to “post-materialist” values and would end up cohabiting with often older generations, driven by so-called “materialist” values, expressing their greater support for economic growth, welfare state public policies and principles of authority. With the generalization of economic development, "post-materialist" values, and with them the democratic values associated with them (since the need for expression and individual autonomy are antithetical to political authoritarianism), should spread in Western societies.

Ultimately, the autonomy of the subject characterizing demo-liberal society would subsequently generate individuation, i.e., the process in which one considers themselves as “a world”. The individual’s actions and their references are both the object of their will and their ability to live according to the strength of his imagination. Moreover, their behaviours and desires can no longer have limits set by normative and/or legislative principles assumed collectively and/or by public power. The common narrative in politics and in all other areas would be replaced by the self-narrative, consumerism and “egocracy”, facilitated by new technologies and artificial intelligence.

Operationalisation

From an operational point of view, the ILRES MyPanel is the basis of the survey. It currently has 17,000 members. Recognised both nationally and internationally, considering its size, it can be used to carry out representative surveys of the resident population using the CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview) system. The profile variables used in setting up the initial sample were age, gender, region of residence, nationality, and professional activity (yes vs. no). The distribution of residents according to these variables is done in accordance with the official statistics of the STATEC (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg) each year. The 1,500 people surveyed (1,000 Luxembourgish citizens and 500 foreigner residents), paid between 10 and 15 euros, answered a questionnaire lasting between 30-40 minutes, comprising 80 questions in German, English, French and Luxembourgish (based on a choice of preference).

Methodology	Sample	Period
The interviews were conducted online via ILRES' MyPanel	A sample of 1058 voters and 500 foreign residents was drawn	Du 6 juin au 20 juin 2023

PONDERATION	Luxembourgish	Foreigners
Male	48.83%	51.49%
Female	51.17%	48.51%
18-24	12.66%	6.71%
25-34	17.16%	21.94%
35-44	14.48%	24.17%
45-54	14.64%	20.93%
55-64	16.79%	14.41%
65+	24.27%	11.83%
Lux-ville	11.15%	30.01%
Rest of centre	15.70%	15.21%
South	39.28%	33.79%
North	19.70%	12.13%
East	14.16%	8.87%

The samples were weighted separately based on statistics received in April 2023 from STATEC. The median duration of the questionnaire was 44 minutes.

SAMPLE OBTAINED	Luxembourgish	Foreigners
Male	49.1%	51.2%
Female	50.9%	48.8%
18-24	12.3%	2.0%
25-34	17.0%	11.0%
35-44	14.7%	21.0%
45-54	15.7%	28.6%
55-64	17.8%	20.8%
65+	22.5%	16.6%
Lux-ville	11.2%	22.8%
Rest of centre	28.2%	15.4%
South	40.1%	35.2%
North	19.4%	14.8%
East	12.4%	11.8%

Number of invitations sent: 5975. Number of people who clicked on the link: 2337 (67% completed the survey, 16% interrupted it, and 17% were eliminated).

List of Political Groups Included in the Study

- Communist Party of Luxembourg (PCL-KPL)
- The Left (Déi Lénk)
- The Greens (Déi Gréng)
- Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party (POSL-LSAP)
- Democratic Party (PD-DP)
- VOLT Luxembourg (VOLT Lëtzebuerg)
- Christian Social People's Party (PCS-CSV)
- Focus (Fokus)
- Democratic Reform Party (ADR)
- Freedom (Fräiheet)
- The Conservatives (Déi Konservativ)
- Pirate Party of Luxembourg (PPL-Piraten)

Reading Note

Although the POLINDEX survey addressed both Luxembourgish citizens and non-citizen residents, this analysis only includes the political body that will vote in the elections on 8th October 2023, i.e., the citizens.

The results regarding the voters of Fokus, Volt, the Luxembourg Communist Party or other political groups, although they are present among the answers, are not mentioned in this first research note, since they did not prove to be statistically representative.

When we discuss the “main vote” or the “partisan electorate”, it describes the voters’ intention to vote for the entire list presented by a party and/or a political movement, or that they would only grant their preferential votes to some of the candidates of the party list. This concerns 69% of the Luxembourgish electorate.

Introduction

The Quality of Democracy

In their theoretical framework, Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino explain that the quality of democracy depicts the functioning of a democratic system. They distinguish eight factors of the quality of democracy⁴, categorizing them into procedural and substantive dimensions.

<i>PROCEDURAL</i>	<i>SUBSTANTIVE</i>	<i>Linking procedural and substantive dimensions</i>
rule of law	civil and political freedoms	responsiveness
participation	political (and economic and social) equality	
competition		
horizontal accountability		
vertical accountability		

In addition to the eight classic dimensions of the quality of democracy, scholars such as Fuchs and Roller (2018) discuss **subjective democratic quality**, arguing that the citizen perspective of democracy must be considered when analyzing the quality of democracy, since the citizens are “**the ultimate sovereign of democracy**”⁵. For the analysis of the subjective quality of democracy, Fuchs and Roller focus on the citizens’ attitude towards democracy, i.e., the citizens’ support for democracy as a form of government in general. Furthermore, Mayne and Geissel argue that “**the overall level of democratic quality in a country can only be considered high when there is a tight fit between democratic institutions and the dispositions of citizens to breathe life into these institutions.**”⁶ They conclude that **institutions and citizens stand in a mutually conditioning relationship.**

Furthermore, the subjective quality of democracy stands in a tight relationship with the functioning of the civil society. The characteristics of the latter, i.e., the **quality of democratic culture**, shed a light on the relationship between political culture and democratic quality. High-quality democratic functioning requires a thriving civil society, by the terminology of Almond and Verba, a “civic culture” which fosters citizen participation and necessitates the

⁴ Diamond, L., & Morlino, L. (Eds.). (2005). Assessing the quality of democracy. JHU Press. pp. 9-31.

⁵ Fuchs, D. ; Roller, E. (2018) : Fuchs, D., & Roller, E. (2018). Conceptualizing and measuring the quality of democracy: the citizens’ perspective. Politics and Governance, 6(1), 22-32.

⁶ Mayne, Q., & Geissel, B. (2016). Putting the demos back into the concept of democratic quality. International Political Science Review, 37(5), 634-644.

rootedness of democratic values. Therefore, the quality of civil society is a pillar of democratic quality.⁷

This analytical report examines five aspects of the Polindex 2023 Study to enhance our understanding of the status of **the quality of democracy in Luxembourg** and its associated challenges. These aspects are 1) the modes of the formulation of public opinion and the level of interest in politics, 2) public trust in the functioning of democracy at the national and EU levels and in democratic institutions and domestic political parties, 3) concepts of citizenship, 4) concepts of representation, and 5) opinions on the participation of foreigner residents and their inclusion in the political life of the Grand Duchy.

The unique composition of Luxembourg's society necessitates the comparison between the perceptions of citizens and foreigner residents.

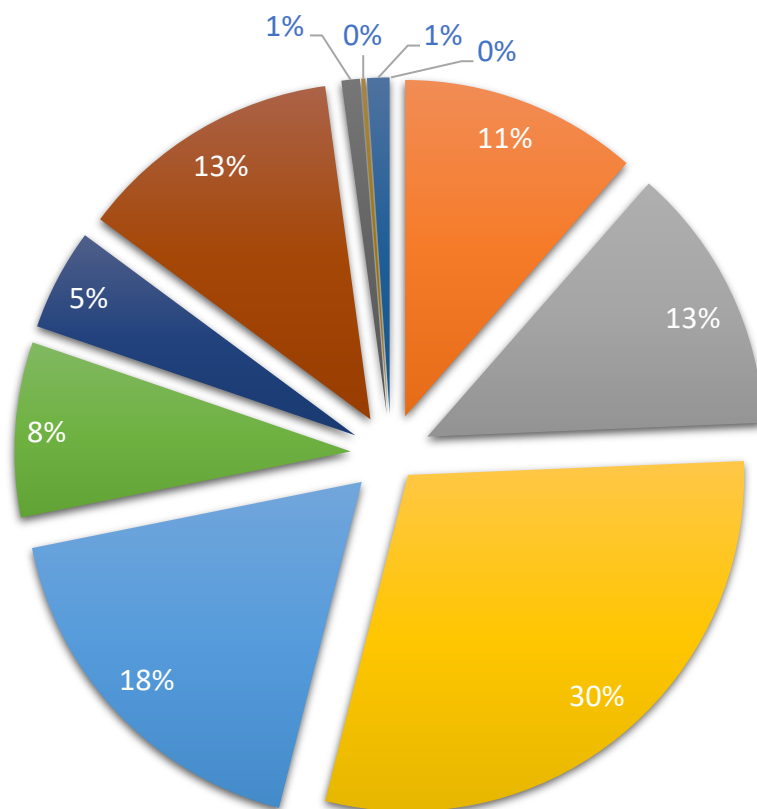
The State of the Quality of Democracy in Luxembourg in 2023

I Formulation of Public Opinion and Interest in Politics

The two charts below show the most important platforms of gathering political information in the citizens' and foreigners' cohorts. The two cohorts share both commonalities and differences. In both groups, the most important source of information are journal articles. However, while websites such as wort.lu or rtl.lu take the second place among citizens, the second most used source for foreigners are political Television programmes, followed by the above-mentioned Internet sites. Radio emissions and discussing politics with family members and friends also play key roles in gathering information of political nature in both cohorts.

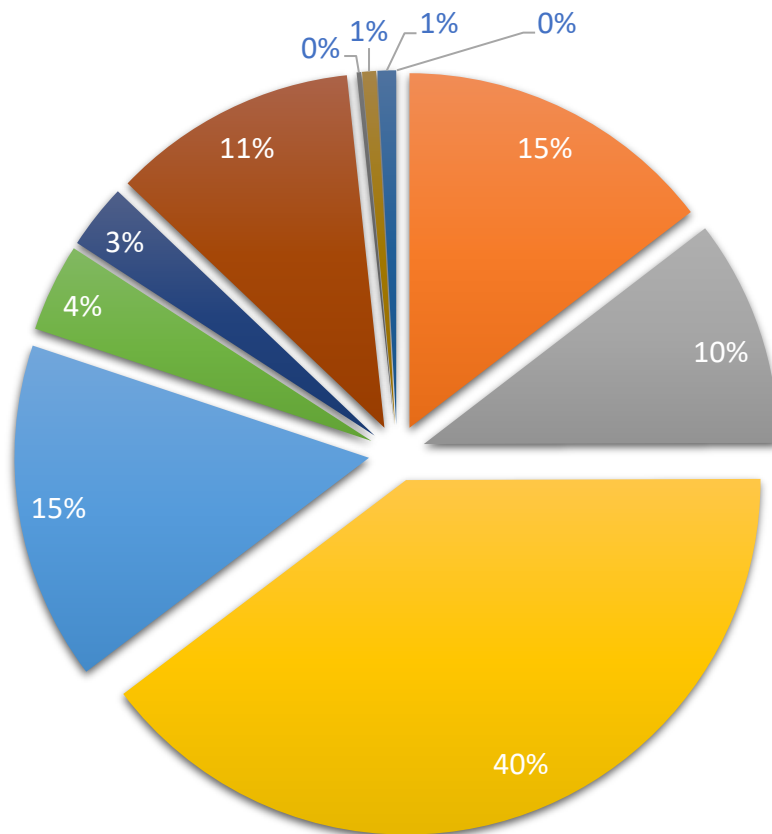
⁷ Darabos, A. (2023): The Quality of Democracy Embedded into Political Culture - A Comparative Study of Luxembourg, Hungary, and the United Kingdom. Doctoral Thesis; University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg

Sources d'information les plus importantes (citoyens)



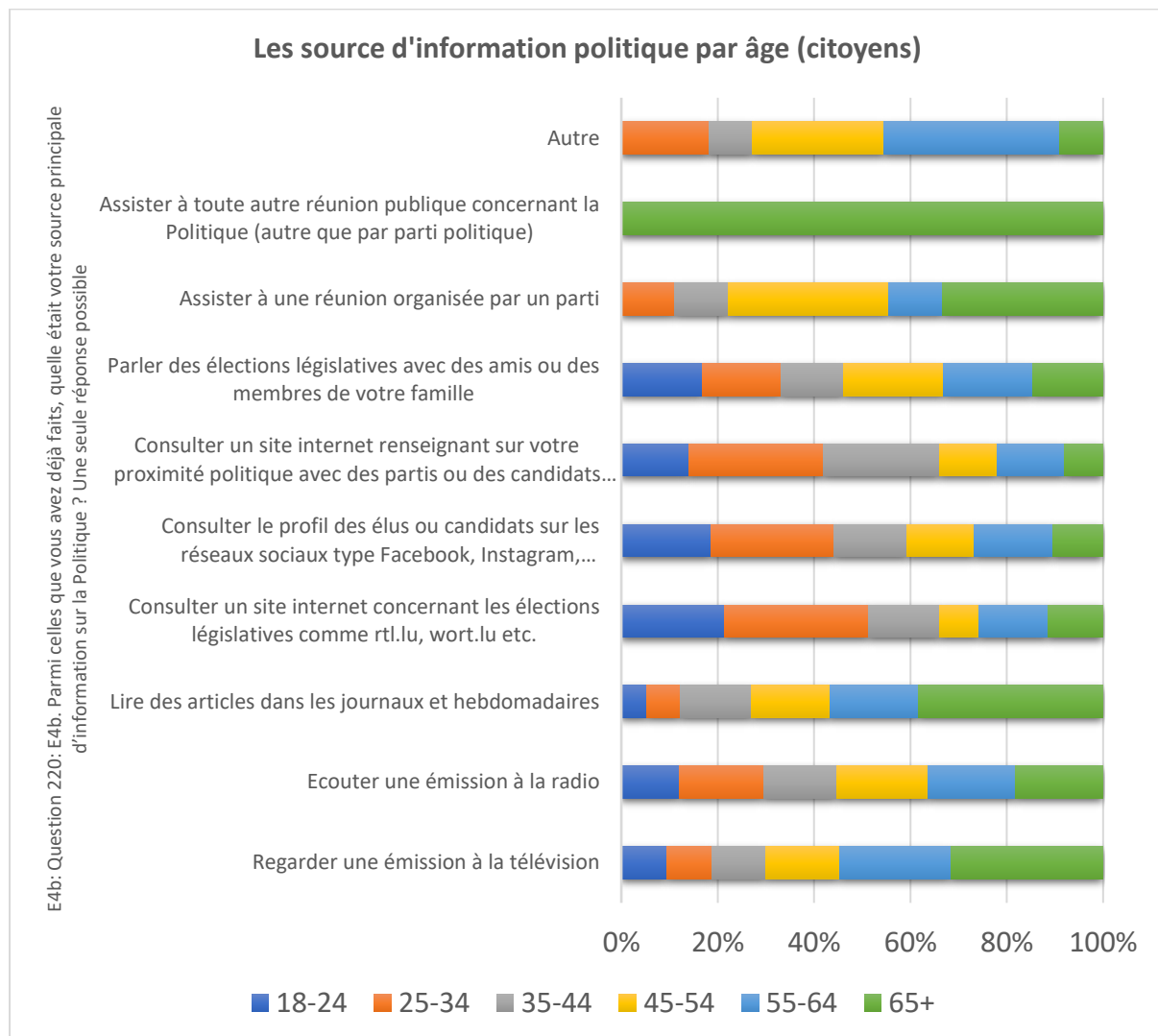
- Regarder une émission à la télévision
- Ecouter une émission à la radio
- Lire des articles dans les journaux et hebdomadaires
- Consulter un site internet concernant les élections législatives comme rtl.lu, wort.lu etc.
- Consulter le profil des élus ou candidats sur les réseaux sociaux type Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tiktok, Twitter, e
- Consulter un site internet renseignant sur votre proximité politique avec des partis ou des candidats (comme smartweilen
- Parler des élections législatives avec des amis ou des membres de votre famille
- Assister à une réunion organisée par un parti
- Assister à toute autre réunion publique concernant la Politique (autre que par parti politique)
- Autre

Sources d'information les plus importantes (étrangers)



- Regarder une émission à la télévision
- Ecouter une émission à la radio
- Lire des articles dans les journaux et hebdomadaires
- Consulter un site internet concernant les élections législatives comme rtl.lu, wort.lu etc.
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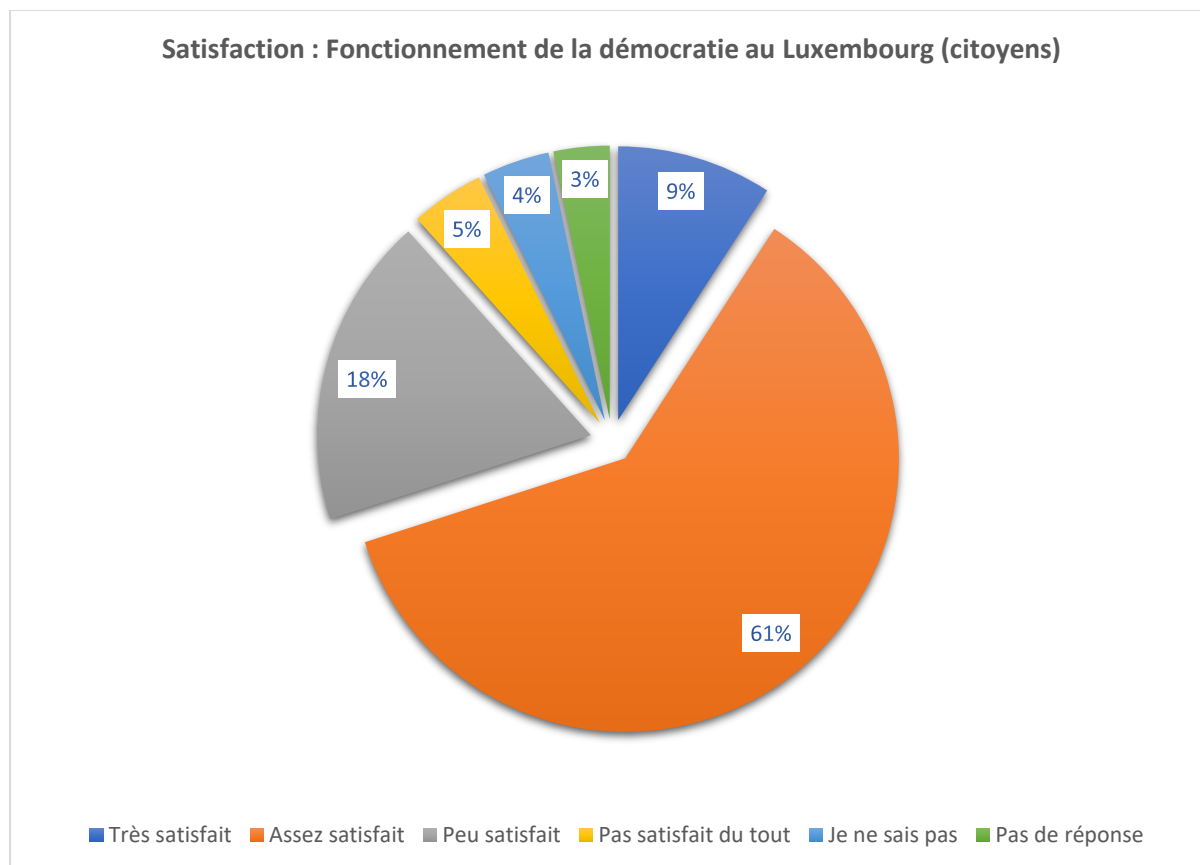
Within the citizens' cohort, it is the 18-24 years old and the 25-34 years old age groups who use the most social media platforms for collecting information of political nature. Using internet for gathering information and for finding out one's political proximity to the different parties (such as Smartwielen) is also more popular among the younger age groups.



II Satisfaction with the Functioning of Democracy in Luxembourg

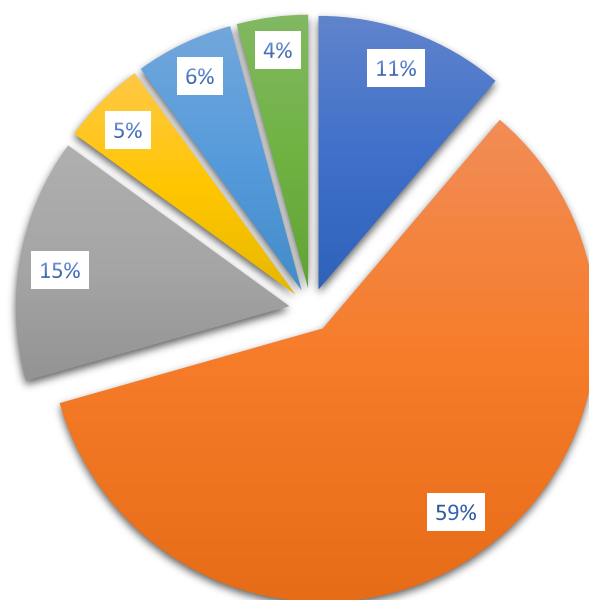
Polindex 2023 Survey asked Luxembourgers about their satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in the country.

Based on our survey results, 70% of Luxembourgish citizens are satisfied with how democracy functions in the country, while 22% are rather critical.



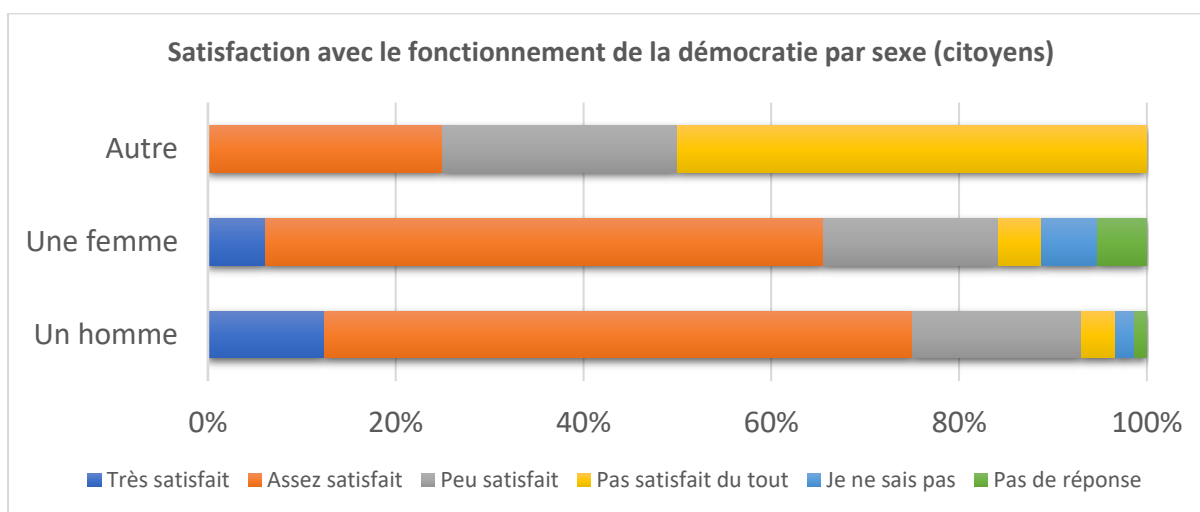
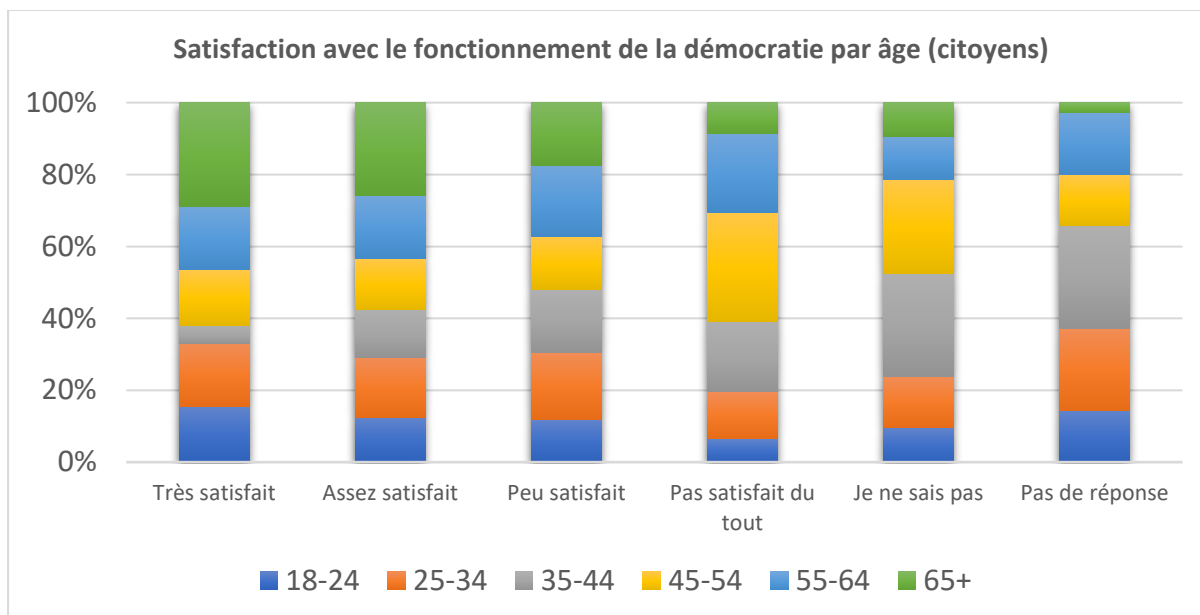
Similarly, 70% of foreigner residents are very much or quite satisfied with the functioning of democracy in the Grand Duchy, along with 19% more critical non-residents.

Satisfaction : Fonctionnement de la démocratie au Luxembourg (étrangers)



■ Très satisfait ■ Assez satisfait ■ Peu satisfait ■ Pas satisfait du tout ■ Je ne sais pas ■ Pas de réponse

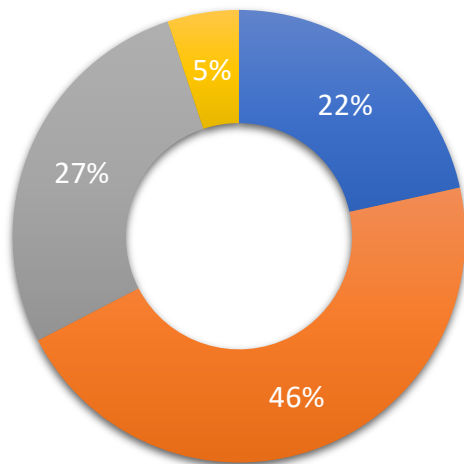
Citizens with highest education of secondary school level, i.e., the biggest cohort in our sample, are the most numerous to be not quite or not at all satisfied with the functioning of democracy in Luxembourg. On the other hand, citizens from groups with the highest revenue (earning more than 6,000 euros per month and per household) are the most satisfied with democracy in the country. The age group with the lowest level of satisfaction with democracy is the group of 45-54 years old, while the most satisfied are citizens of age 65 and above. Regarding electoral districts and territorial organization, our study finds that Luxembourg City has the highest level of satisfaction. When it comes to gender, men display a higher satisfaction with democracy in Luxembourg than women. Citizens of other gender(s) express the strongest criticism about how democracy works in the Grand Duchy.



III The Level of Interest in Politics

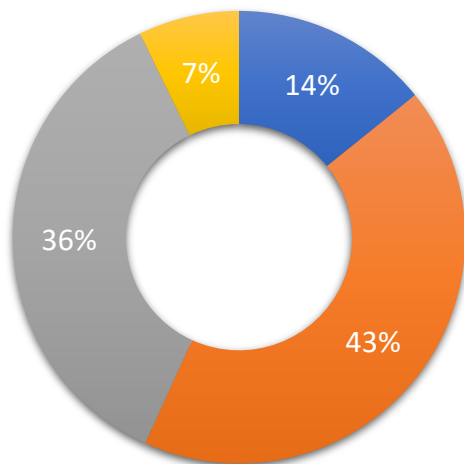
Shown by the following two charts, our study compares how interested citizens and foreigner residents are in politics in general.

Niveau d'intérêt pour la politique (citoyens)



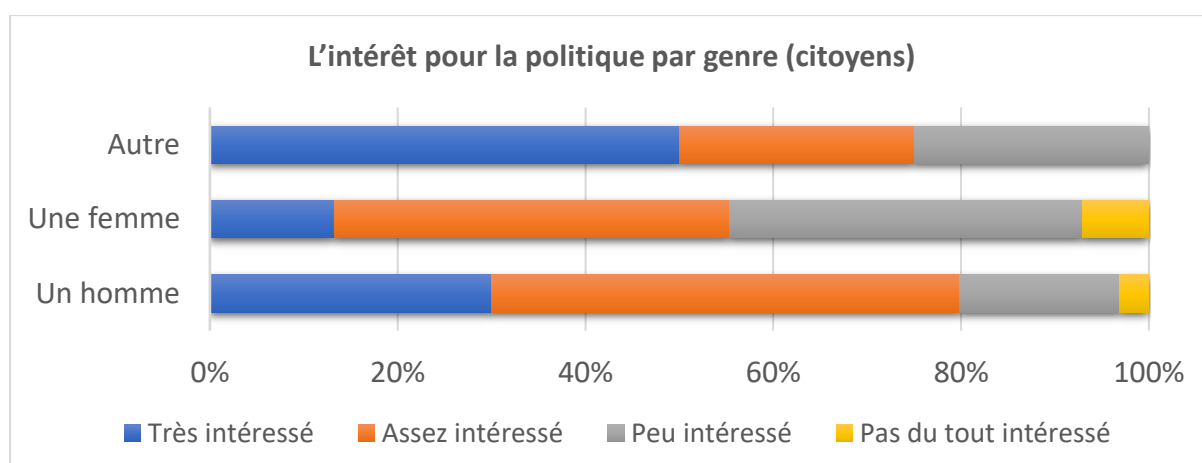
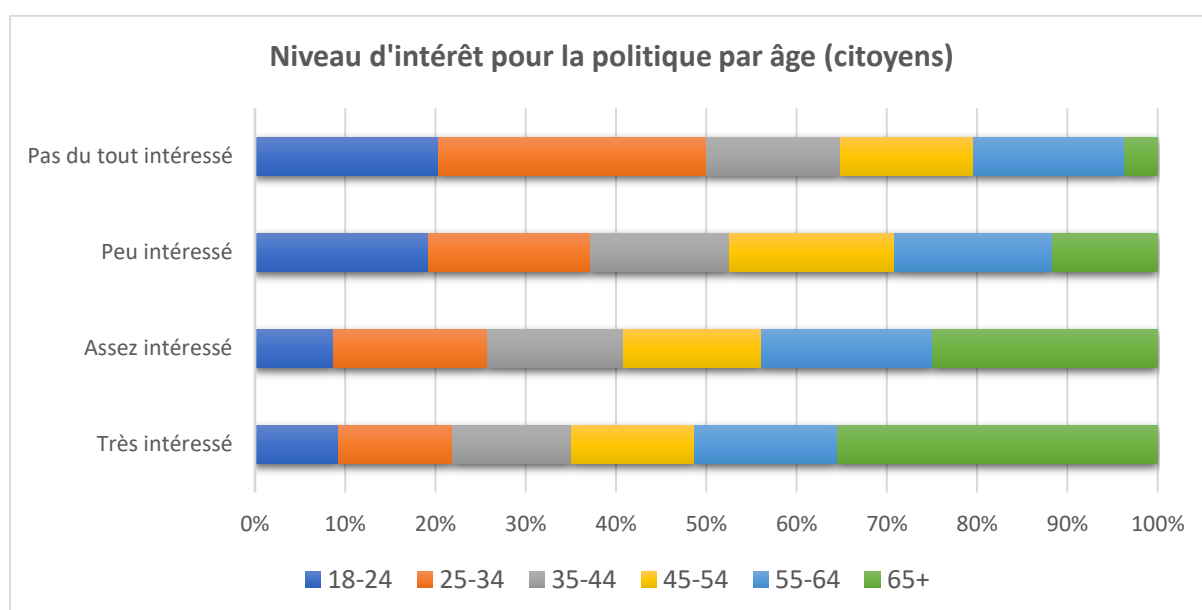
■ Très intéressé ■ Assez intéressé ■ Peu intéressé ■ Pas du tout intéressé

Niveau d'intérêt pour la politique (étrangers)

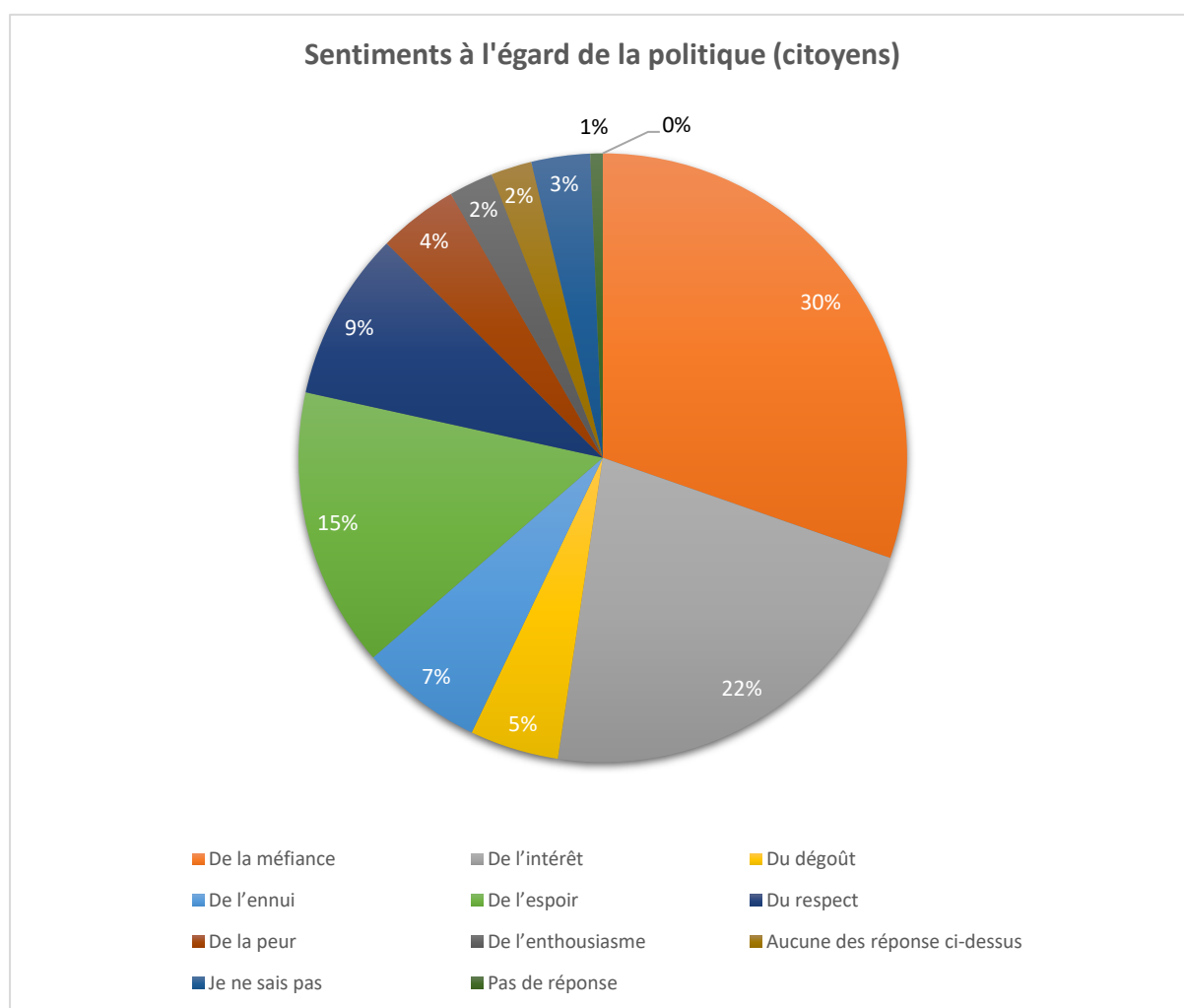


■ Très intéressé ■ Assez intéressé ■ Peu intéressé ■ Pas du tout intéressé

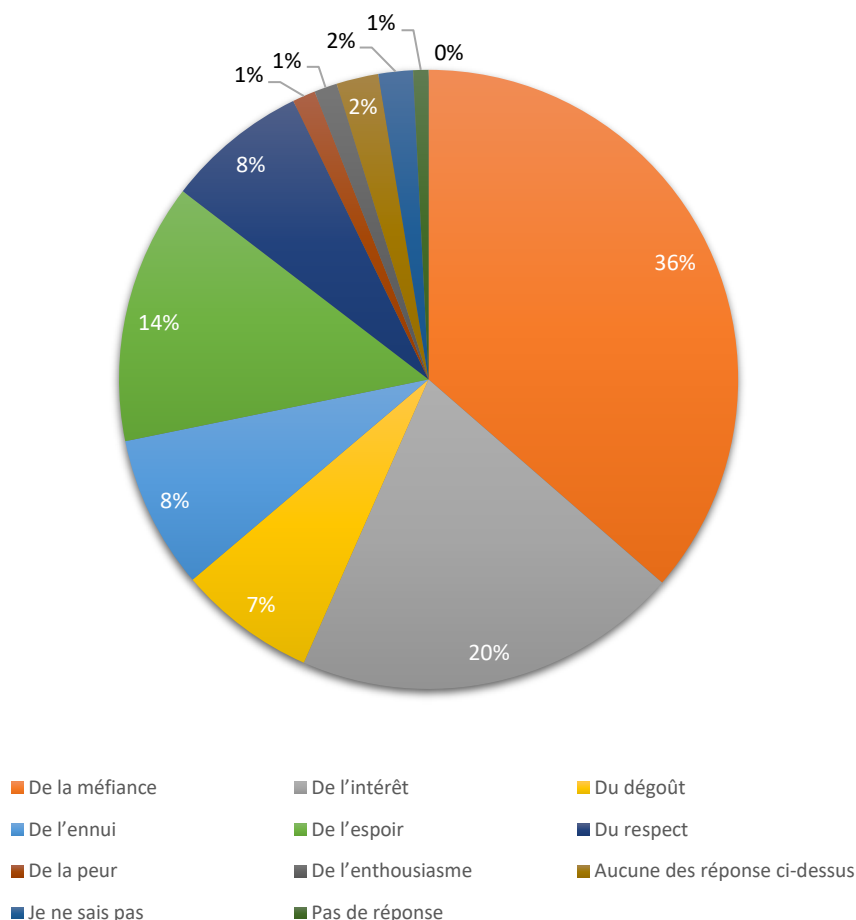
Polindex 2023 found that in the citizen cohort, proportionally, the higher the level of education, the stronger the interest in politics. Furthermore, interest in politics is positively correlated with the level of monthly income available to the household. Regarding the different age groups, the study shows that the youngest are mainly indifferent to politics, while the older groups show the highest level of interest. Regarding electoral districts and territorial organization, we found that more than 75% of citizens in Luxembourg city are interested in politics. This result is to be correlated with the highest level of education and income compared to all the other regions of the Grand Duchy. Regarding gender, Polindex 2023 found that women show the least interest for politics, but positive responses still reach 50% in the cohort.



It is crucial to note that for the first time since 1999, **the dominant feeling about politics is distrust**, while the **second and third most important sentiments are interest and hope**, for both Luxembourg citizens and foreign residents. Although the three main feelings are shared by Luxembourg citizens and foreign residents, the latter display higher level of distrust in our study (36%). As the two charts below show, the strength of the sentiments of being interested by and feeling hopeful about politics is slightly lower in the case of non-citizens.

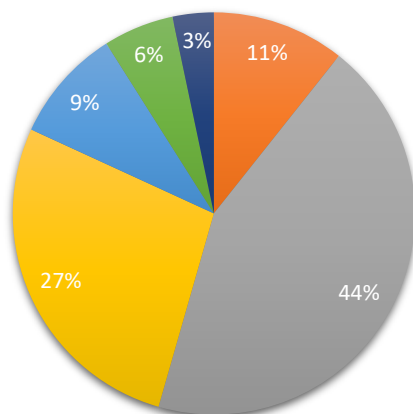


Sentiments à l'égard de la politique (étrangers)



Our study includes questions regarding democracy in general. 80,3% of citizens agreed that “even though democracy can have its problems, it is still better than any other form of government”, while 75,5% agreed that “the democratic regime is irreplaceable, it is the best possible system”. 80,3% agreed with the idea that “it is important to vote because it is through elections that we can change things”. However, only 54,4% feels that “the political system in Luxembourg allows people to have a say in what the government does”. This means that more than one third of the citizens feel that their voice does not count in terms of the actions of the political decision makers.

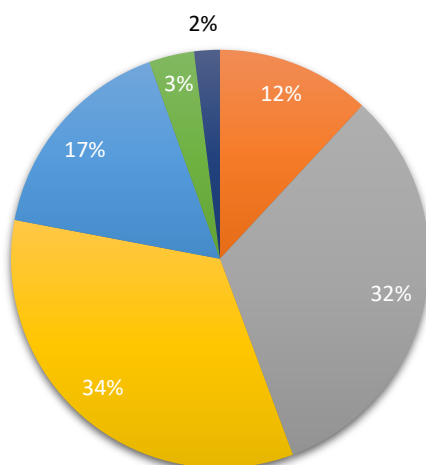
"Le système politique au Luxembourg permet aux personnes comme moi d'avoir leur mot à dire sur ce que fait le gouvernement" (citoyens)



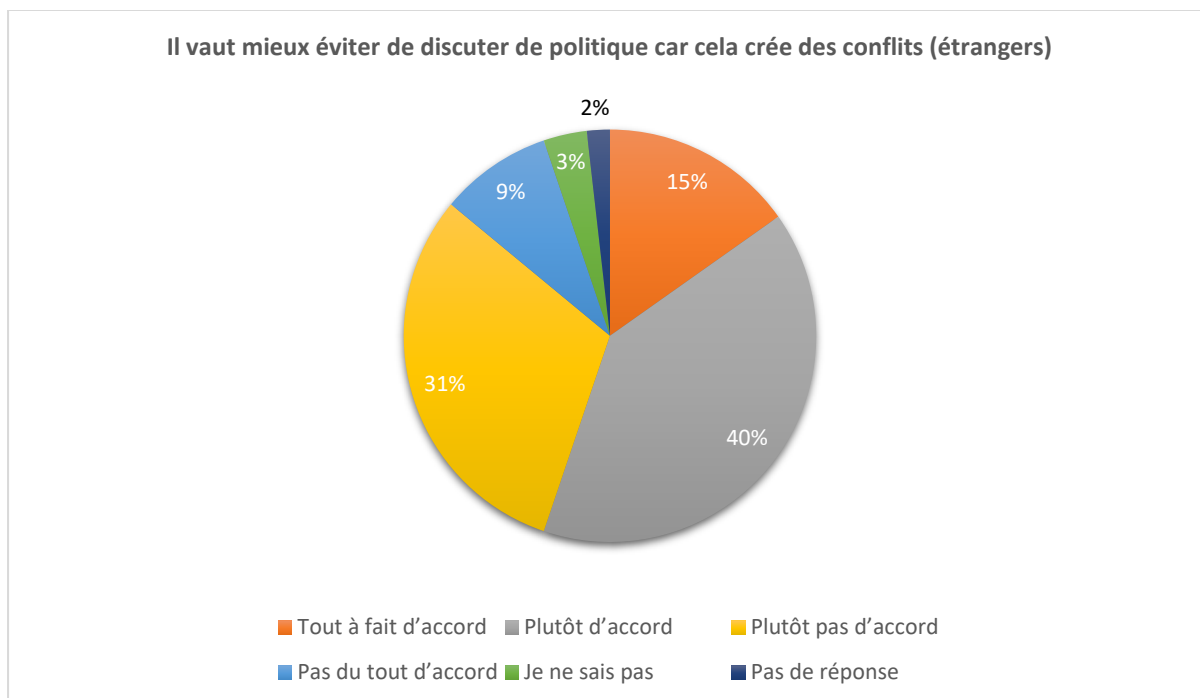
■ Tout à fait d'accord
 ■ Plutôt d'accord
 ■ Plutôt pas d'accord
■ Pas du tout d'accord
 ■ Je ne sais pas
 ■ Pas de réponse

When it comes to discussing politics and whether it may create conflicts, foreigner residents display more concern. While 44,2% of citizens expressed that they feel it is better to avoid discussing politics as it may create conflicts, the rate is 55,2% in case of foreigners.

Il vaut mieux éviter de discuter de politique car cela crée des conflits (citoyens)



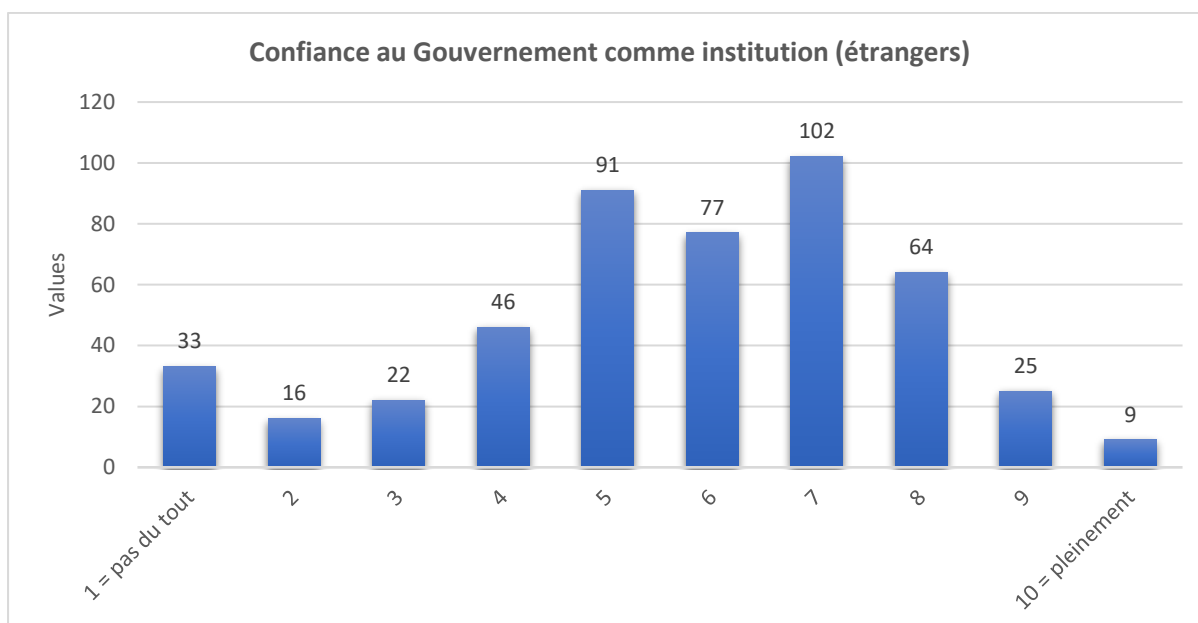
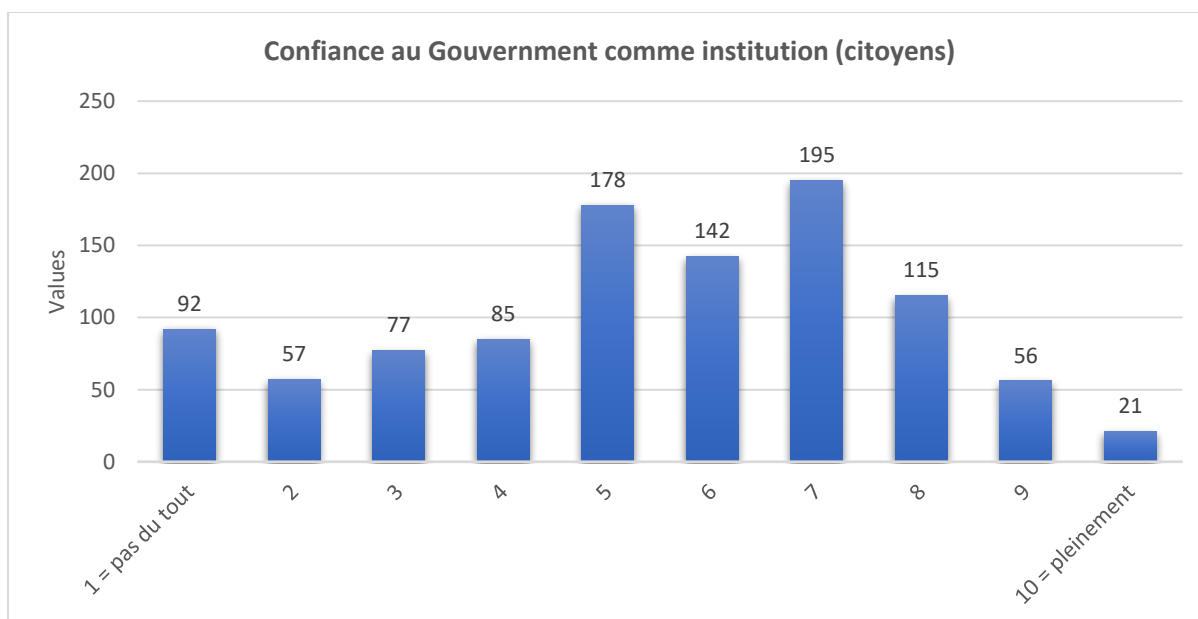
■ Tout à fait d'accord
 ■ Plutôt d'accord
 ■ Plutôt pas d'accord
■ Pas du tout d'accord
 ■ Je ne sais pas
 ■ Pas de réponse



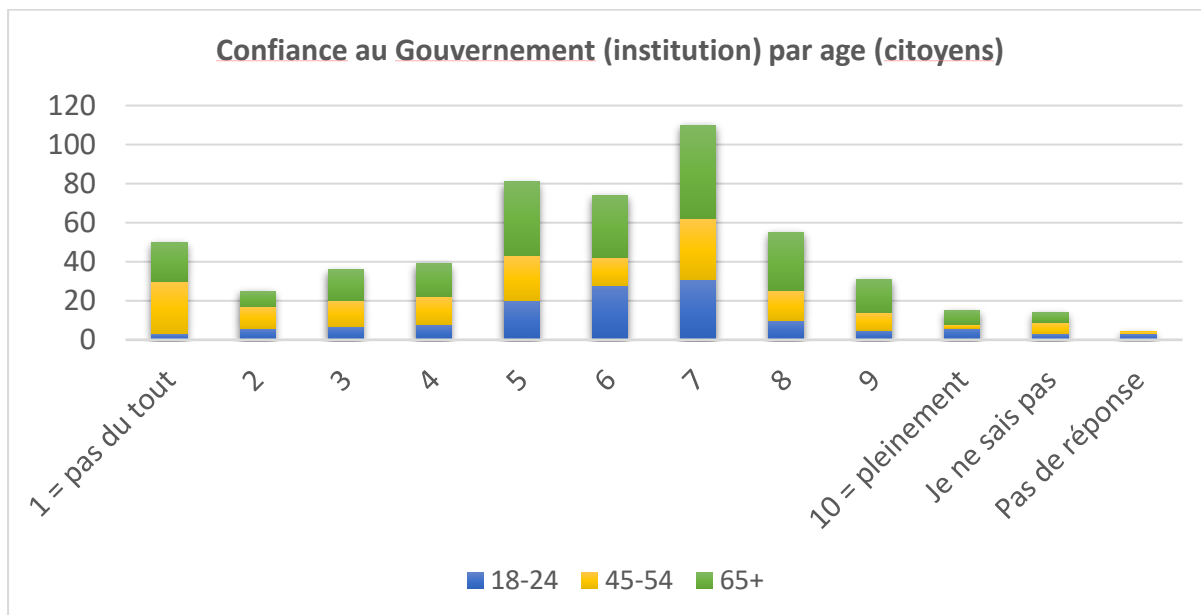
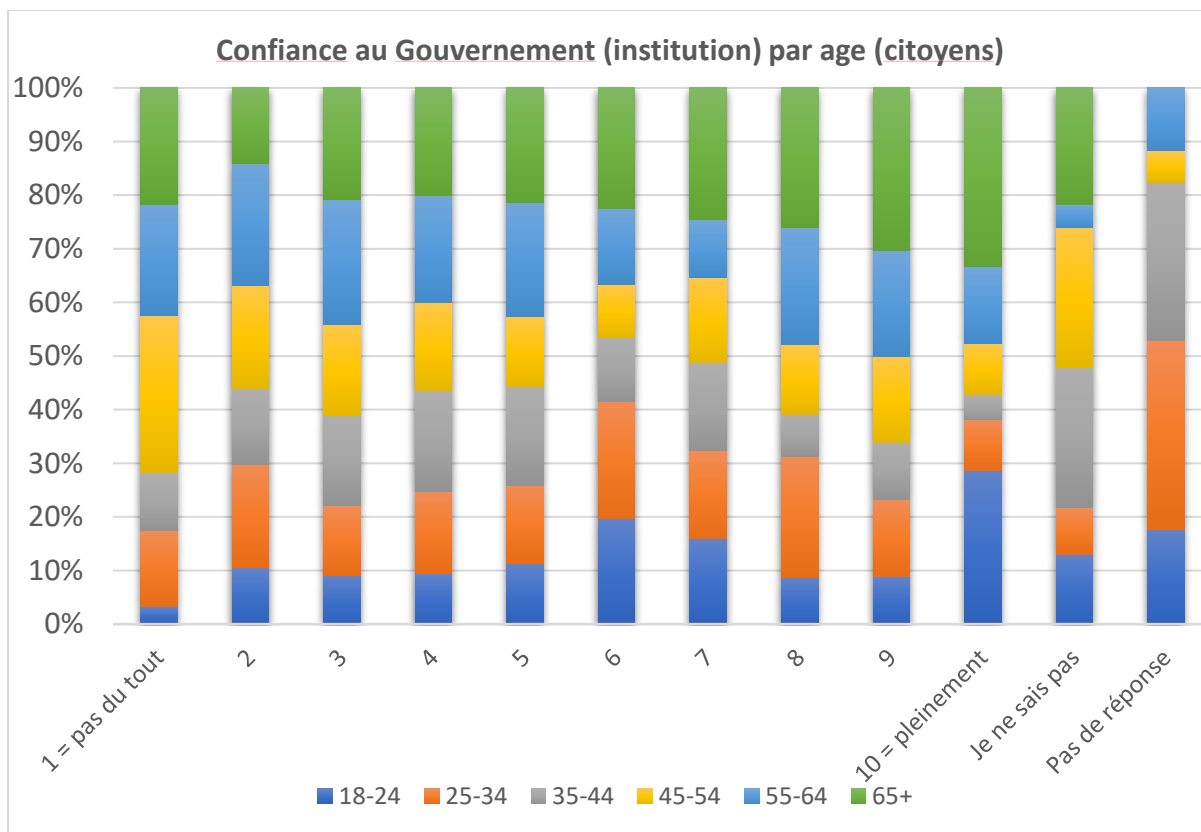
IV Public Trust in the Government as an Institution

Our findings confirm the traditionally strong public trust in both the institutions of the government and the Chamber of Deputies, which is a longstanding characteristic of the consensus democracy model of the Grand Duchy as well as an essential aspect of the subjective quality of democracy. However, non-citizen residents of the country show slightly higher confidence in both institutions than citizens.

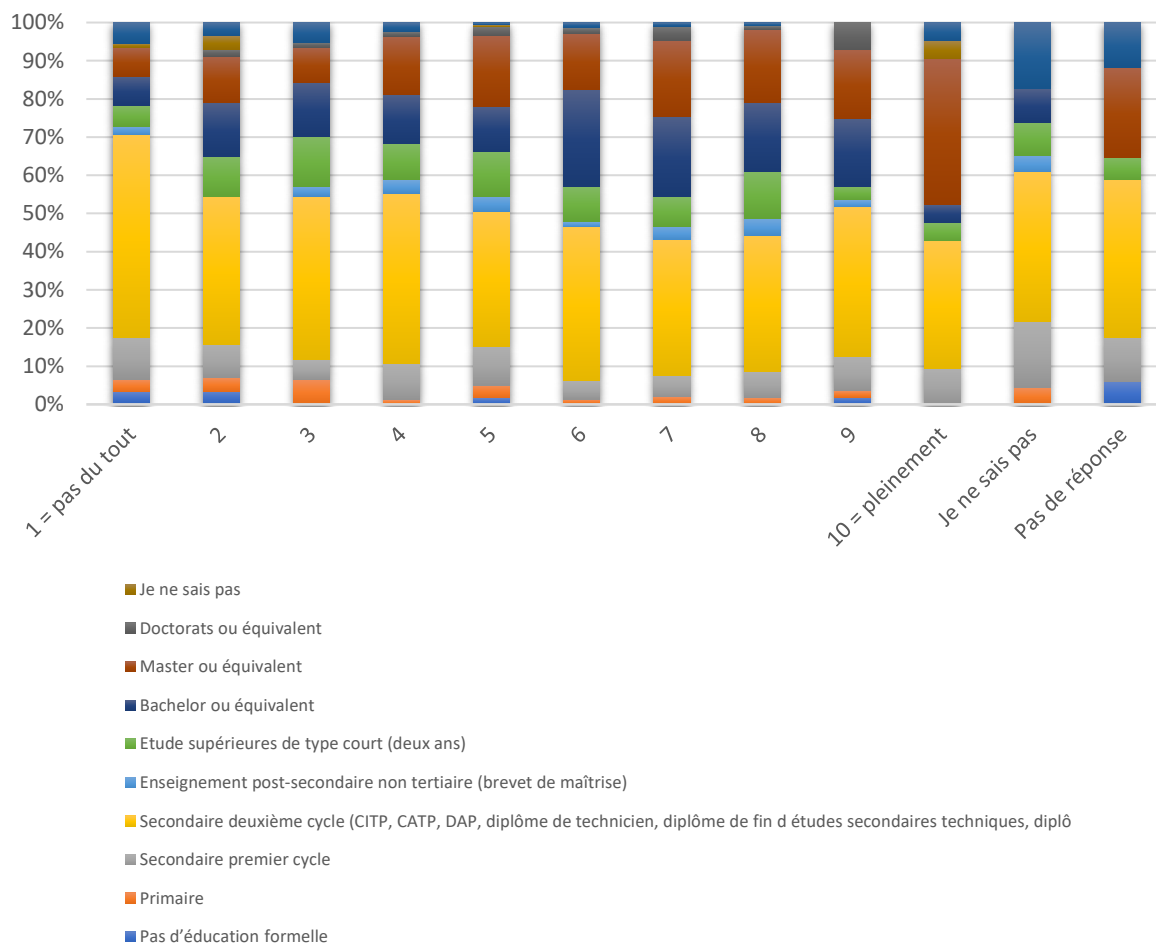
As the two charts below demonstrate, on a scale of 1 to 10, Luxembourg citizens and foreign residents share similar dynamics concerning their confidence in the government as a democratic institution. The mean satisfaction level within the citizens' cohort is 5,23, and slightly higher in the case of non-citizens: 5,71.



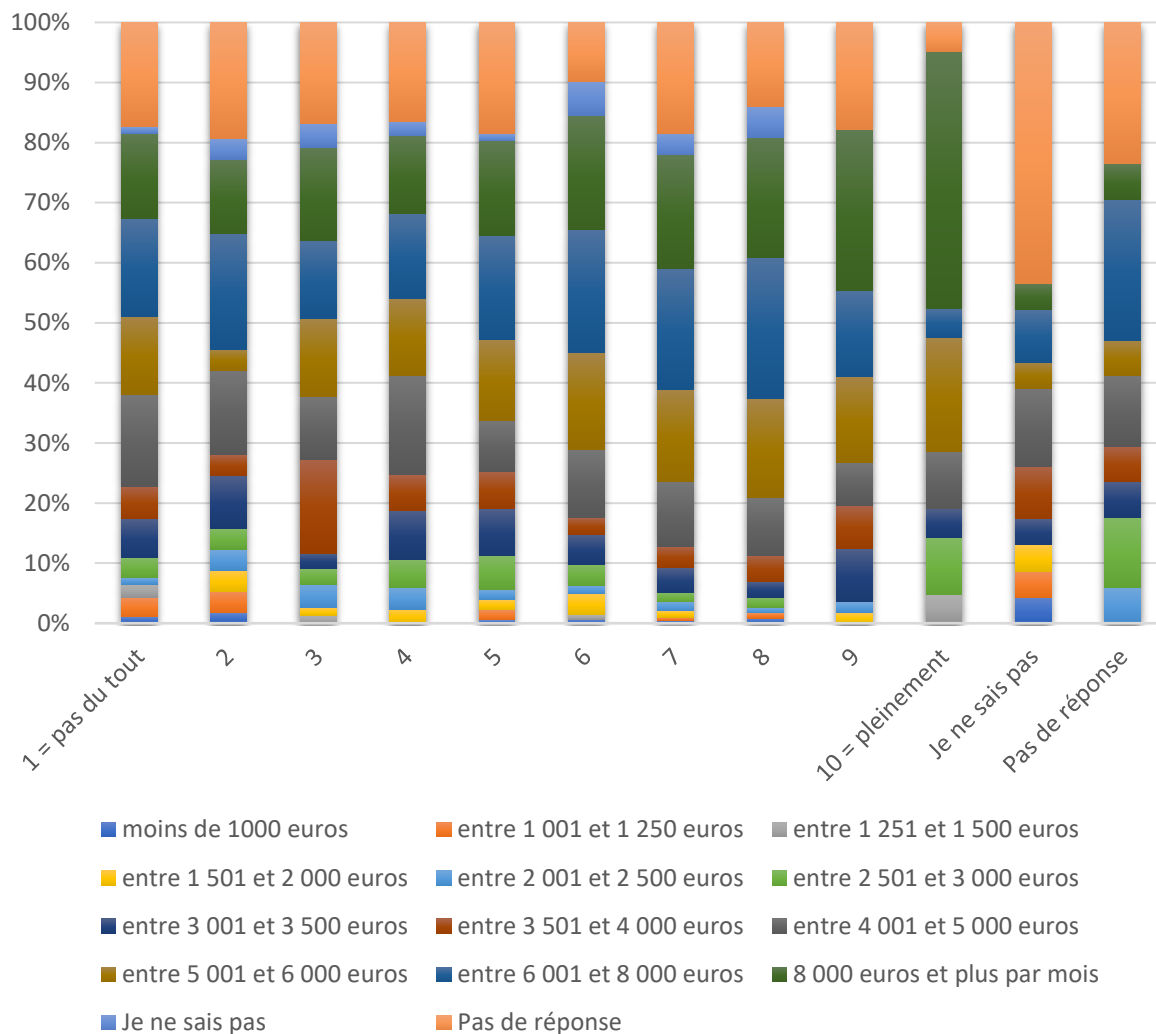
Polindex 2023 Study observes that the higher the level of education among the citizens, the stronger the trust in the government. Furthermore, our findings show that the cohort with the highest monthly income (8000 euros and more per month per household) have the highest level of confidence in the government. The age group which is the most critical regarding the government as an institution is the group of 45-54. While the eldest group of citizens aged 65+ has the highest confidence in their government, the youngest age group displays a relatively strong level of trust too, compared to other age groups.

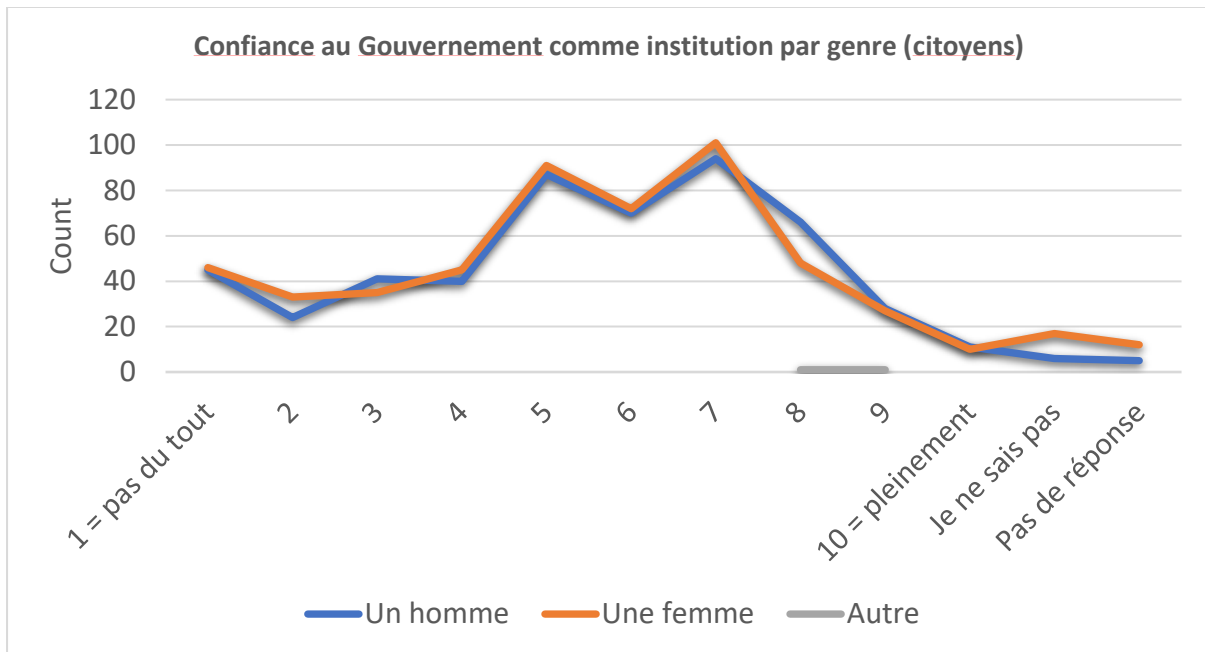


Confiance au Gouvernement (institution) par niveau d'instruction (citoyens)



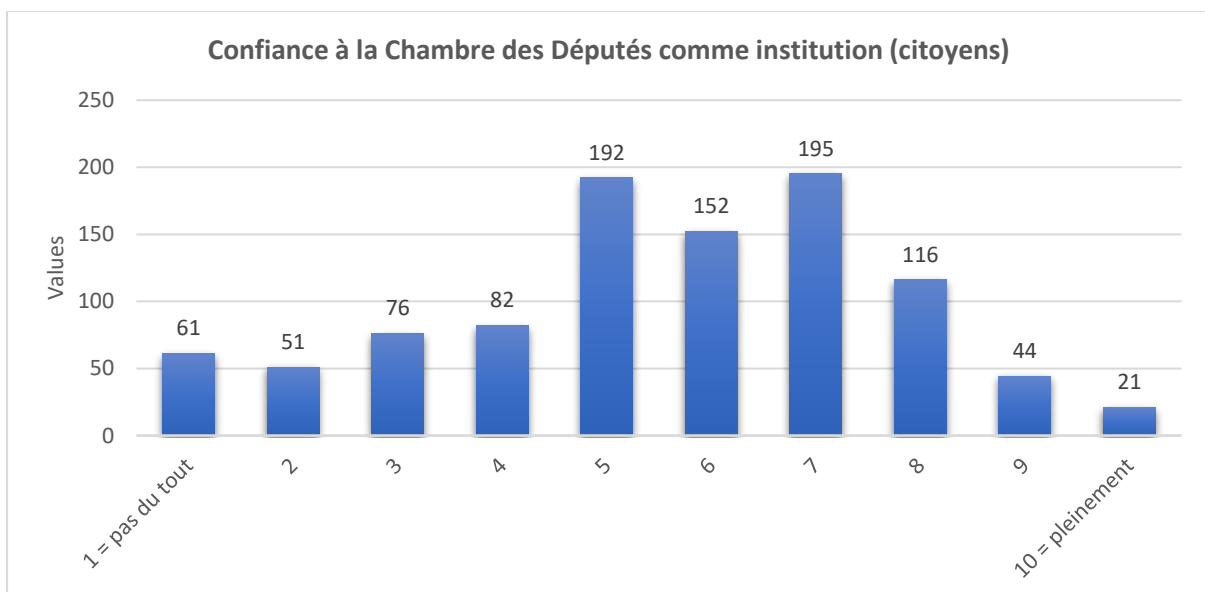
Confiance au Gouvernement comme institution par revenu (citoyens)

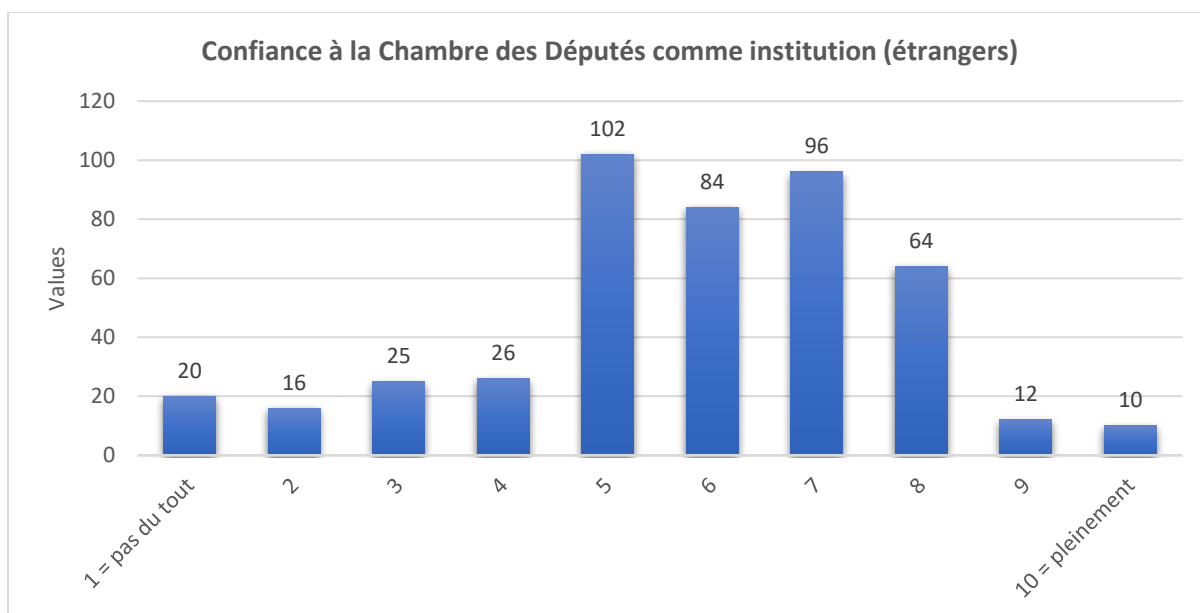




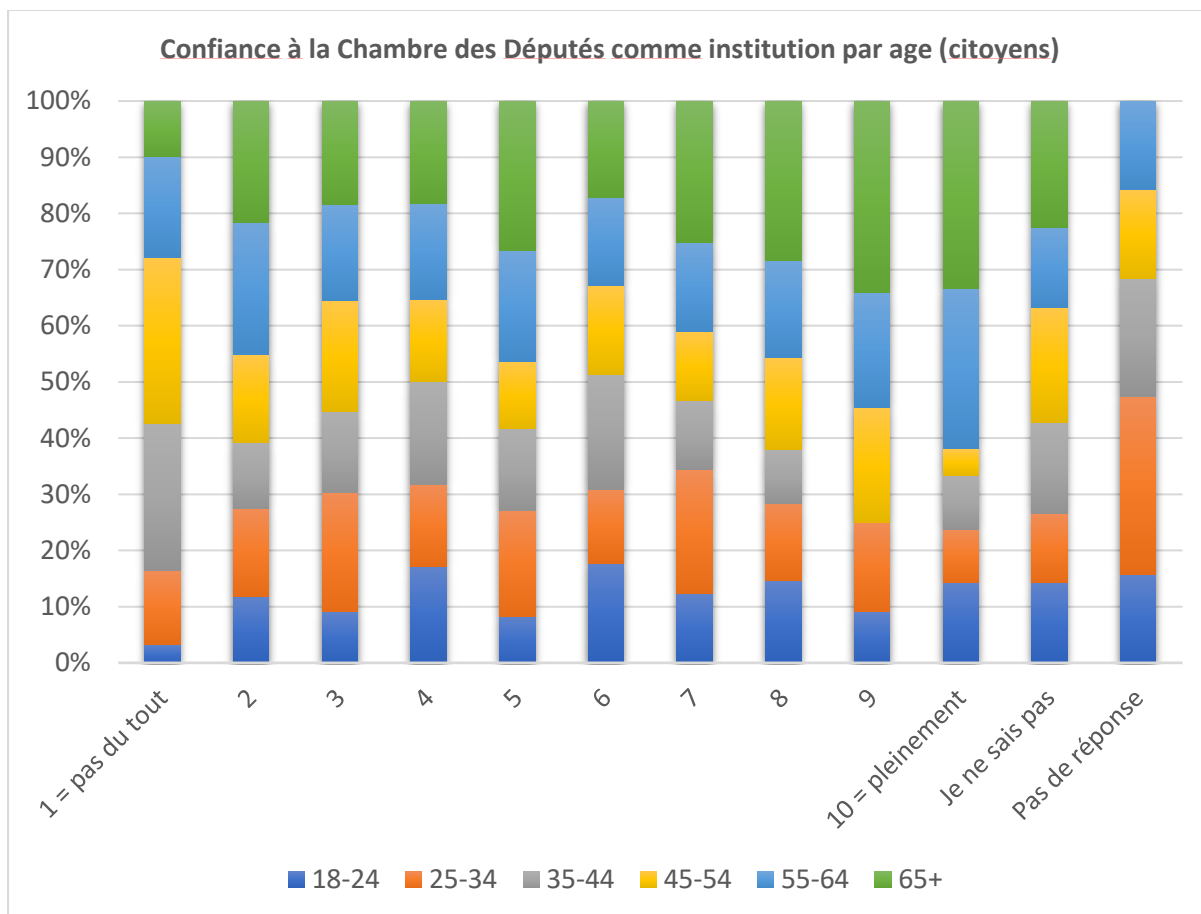
V Public Trust in the Chamber of Deputies

On a scale of 1 to 10, the average confidence the parliament among citizens is 5,55, which means higher public trust than in the case of the government. The mean is 5,8 in the case of non-citizen residents, which also shows a higher public trust towards the parliament than towards the government.

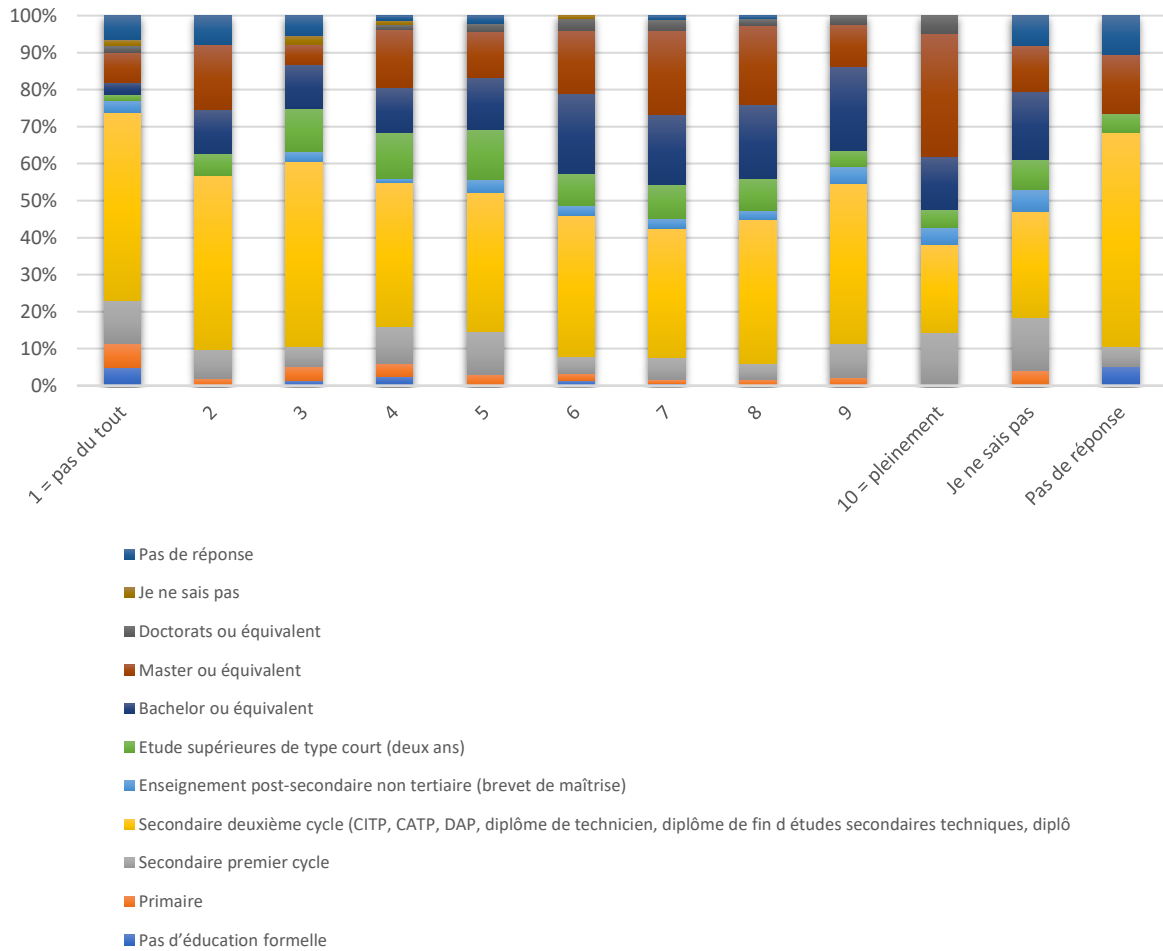




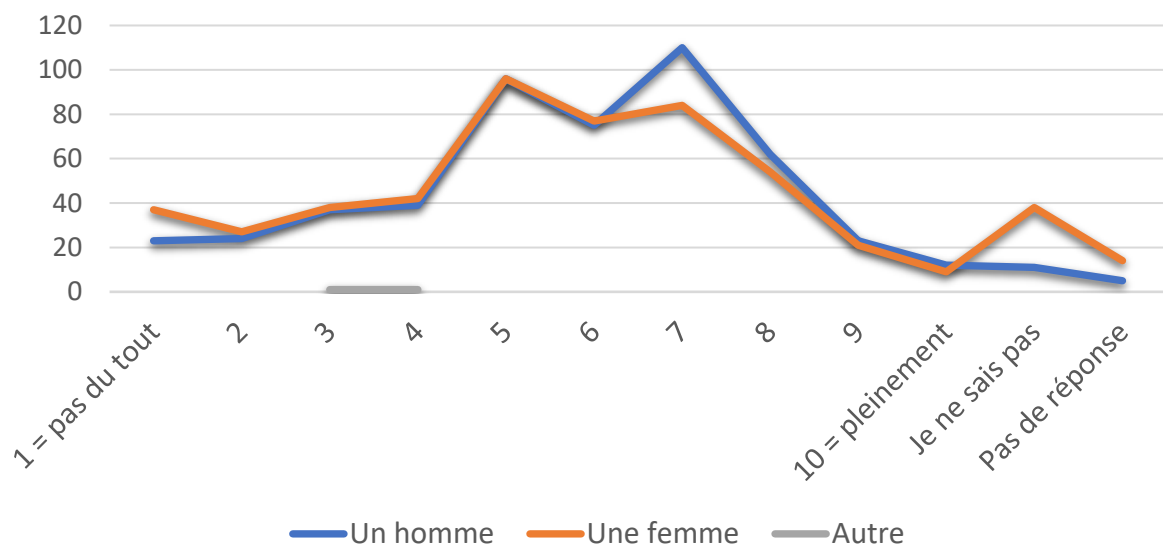
Polindex 2023 concludes the same finding regarding the relationship between educational level and public trust in parliament as in the case of the government: the higher the level of education, the stronger the public trust in the parliament. It is important to note that the distancing of citizens with the highest educational level of secondary school from the Parliament is relatively less strong than from the Government (as shown previously). Again, the higher the level of monthly income, the stronger the level of confidence. Considering age groups, we found that those belonging to the group of 45-54 years old are both the most critical towards the institution – just like in the case of the government.

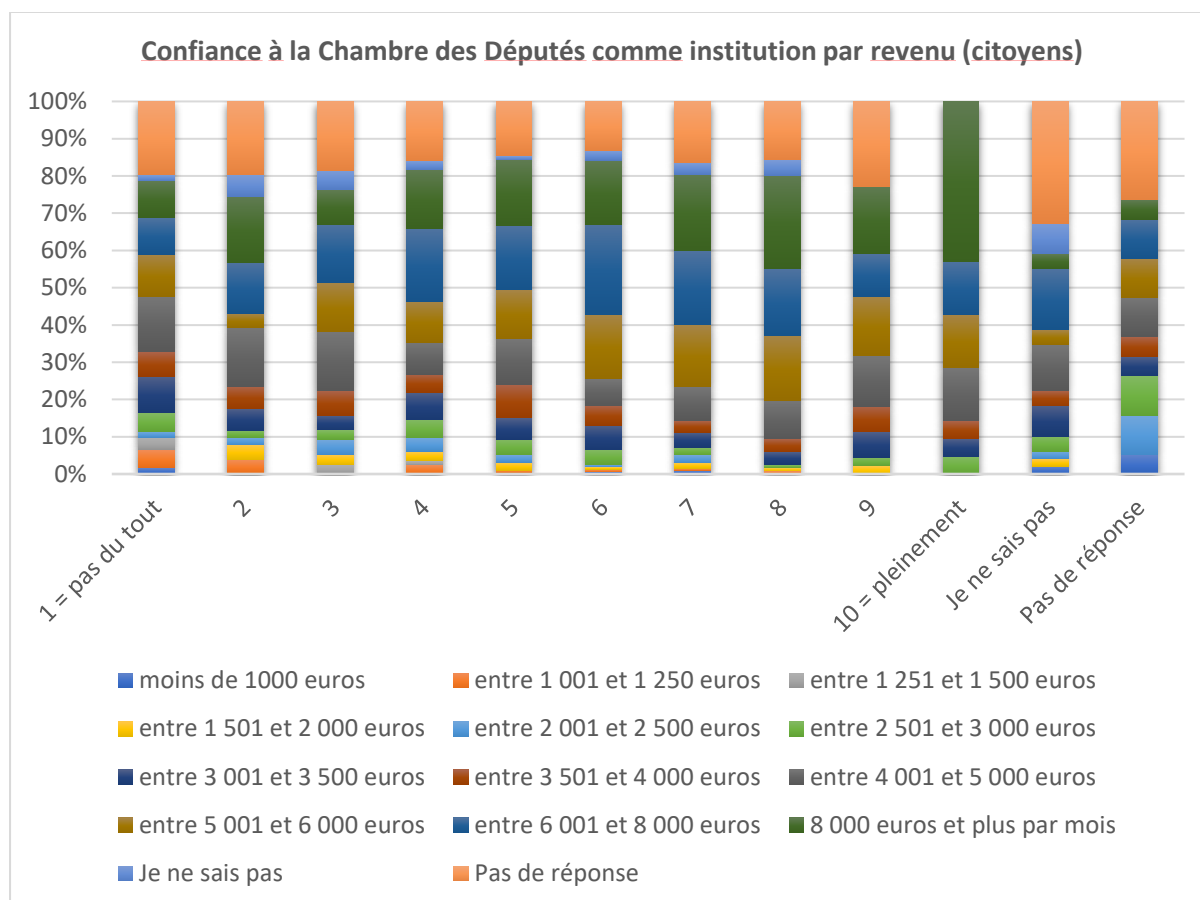


Confiance à la Chambre des Députés comme institution par niveau d'instruction (citoyens)



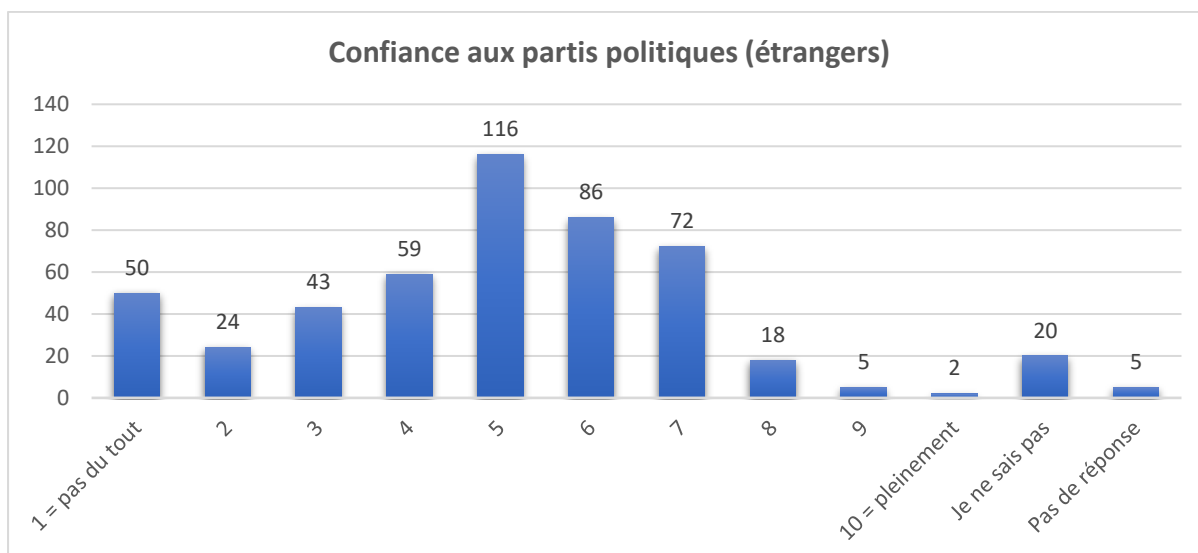
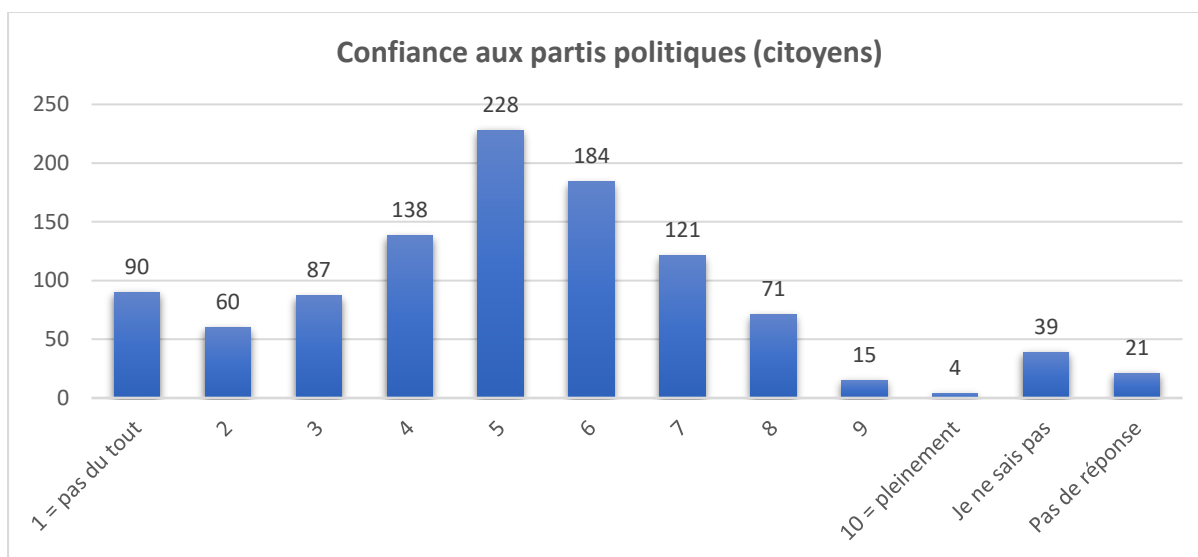
Confiance au Chambre des Députés comme institution par sexe (citoyens)





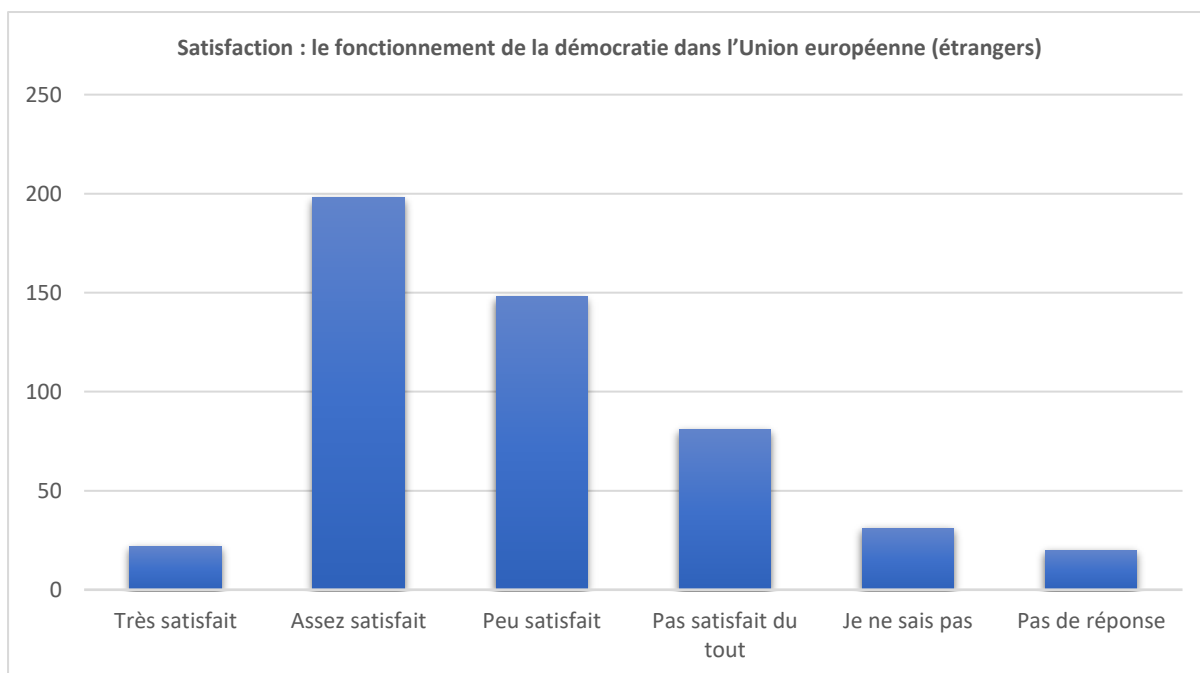
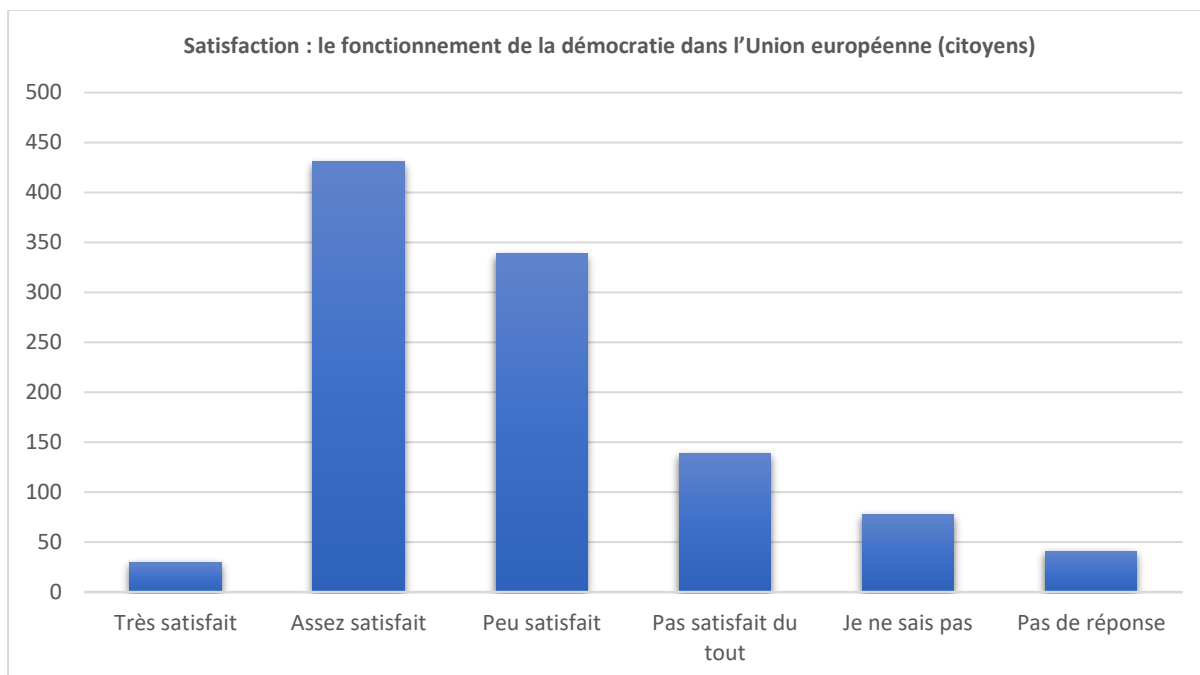
VI Public Trust in Domestic Political Parties

As the charts below show, the level of trust in Luxembourgish political parties is nearly identical in the cohorts of Luxembourgish citizens and/or foreign residents. Among citizen respondents, our survey assessed an average trust of 4.86 on a scale 1-10. In the foreigners' cohort, the mean was 4,78. In comparison, the findings of European Values Survey 2008 and 2017 (which assess the opinions of both citizens and foreigner residents) regarding public trust in parties was 40% and 27%, respectively. Our results confirm the reinforcement of public trust in political parties. This positive result is to be understood in the context of the constitutional role and responsibility of parties in the democratic life of the Grand Duchy.



VII Public Perceptions about Democracy in the EU

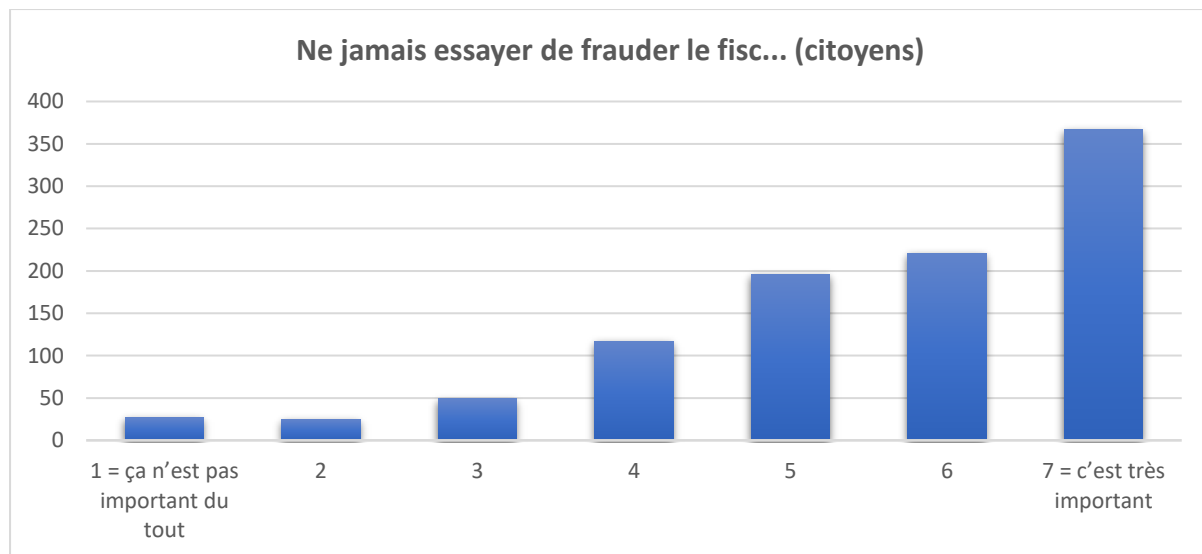
Our survey asked Luxembourgers and foreign residents regarding their satisfaction with the functioning of democracy at the level of the European Union. The following two charts show satisfaction in the citizen and non-citizen resident cohorts which show similar results. The study found that 44 % of Luxembourgish citizens are quite or very much satisfied with democracy at the EU level. The rate is identical in the case of foreigners. 45% of Luxembourgish citizens, however, are not quite or at all satisfied with EU-level democracy, while 46% of foreigner responses were critical regarding the functioning of democracy in the EU.



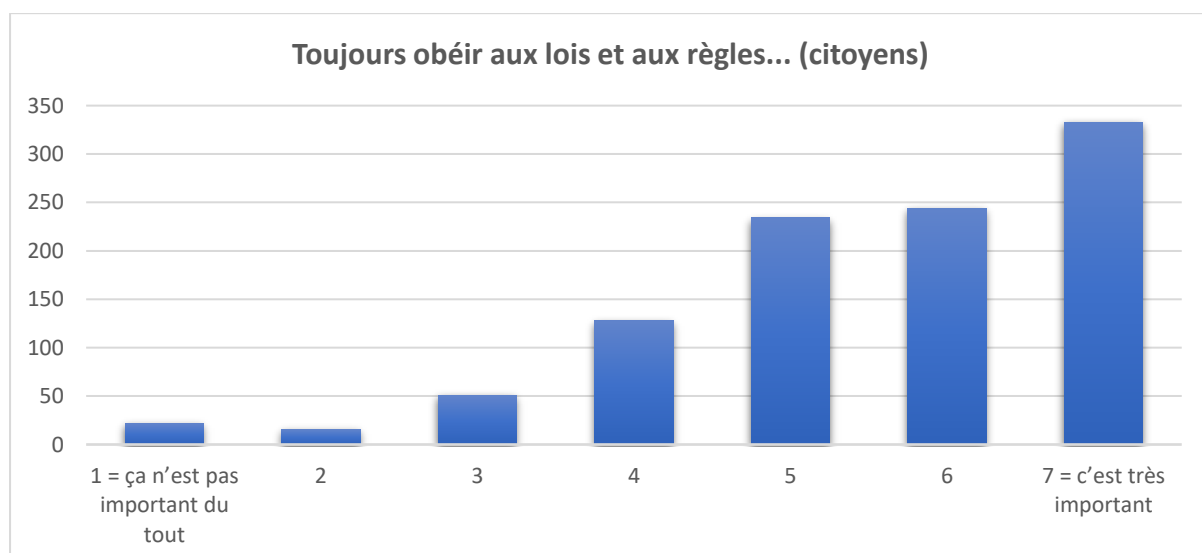
This dissonance in trust between national democracy and European democracy certainly raises the question of the difference and understanding of the two political regimes that overlap both representative Government and Governance. Luxembourgers and foreign residents fully identify with the former and do not understand or know little about the latter.

VIII Public Concept of Citizenship

An essential dimension of the subjective quality of democracy is the perceptions about one's role in the democratic system. Our survey asked participants about certain aspects which help us understanding the public concepts of citizenship. One key aspect of citizenship, as outlined by our results, is to respect the fiscal obligations. As the chart below shows, 55,6% of citizens found these duties highly important for considering themselves "good citizens" (importance 6 and 7 on a scale of 1-7).

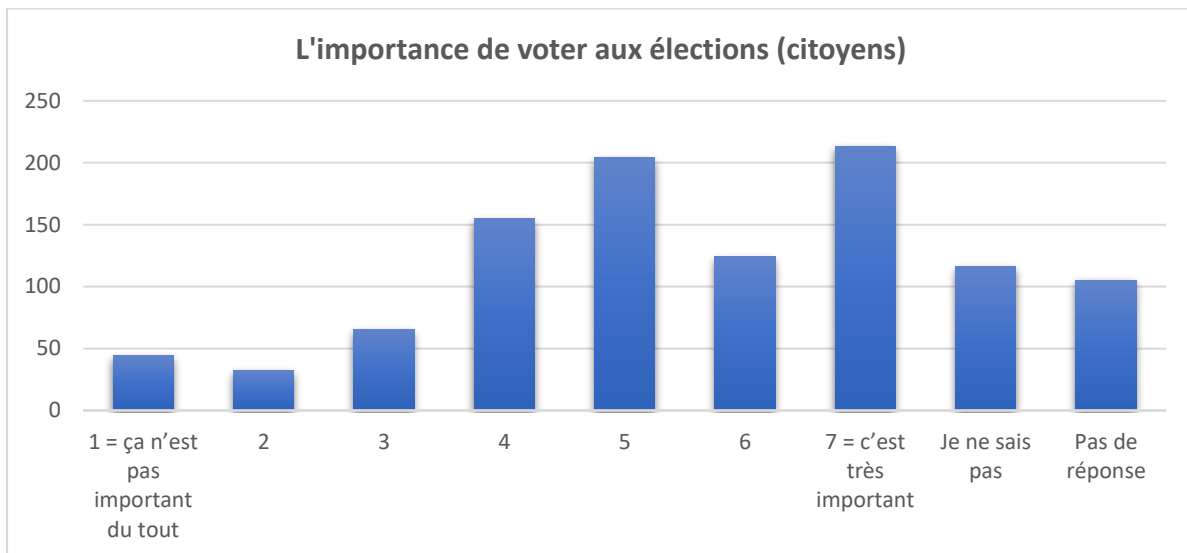


The duty of obeying the law is the second most important element of the public concept of being a good citizen: 54,6% of citizens found it highly important (importance 6 and 7 on a scale of 1-7).

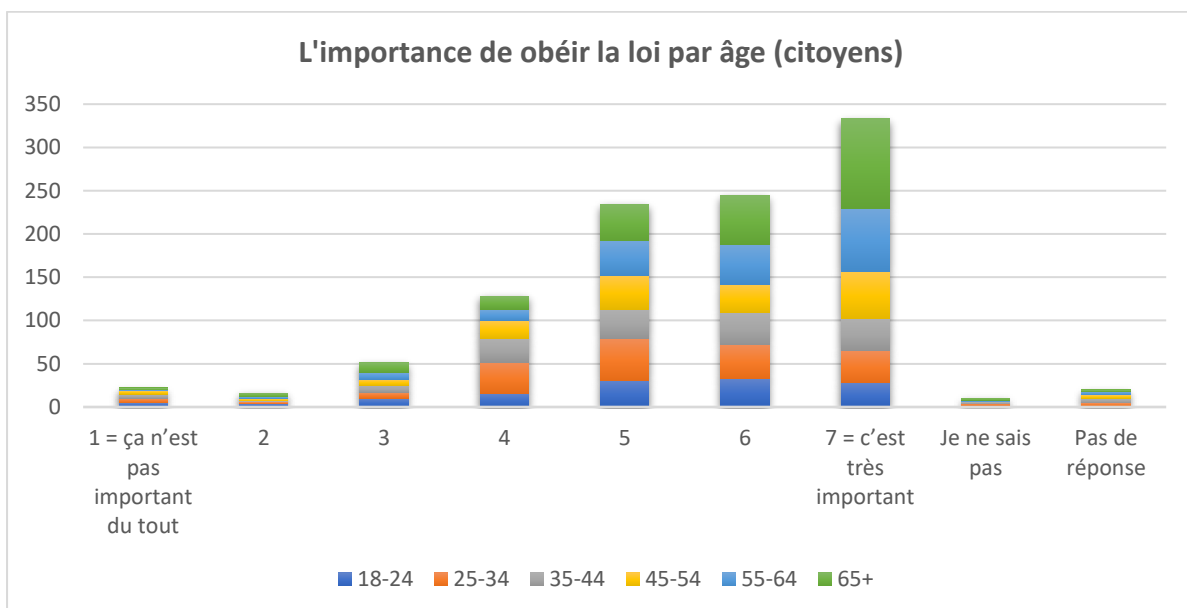


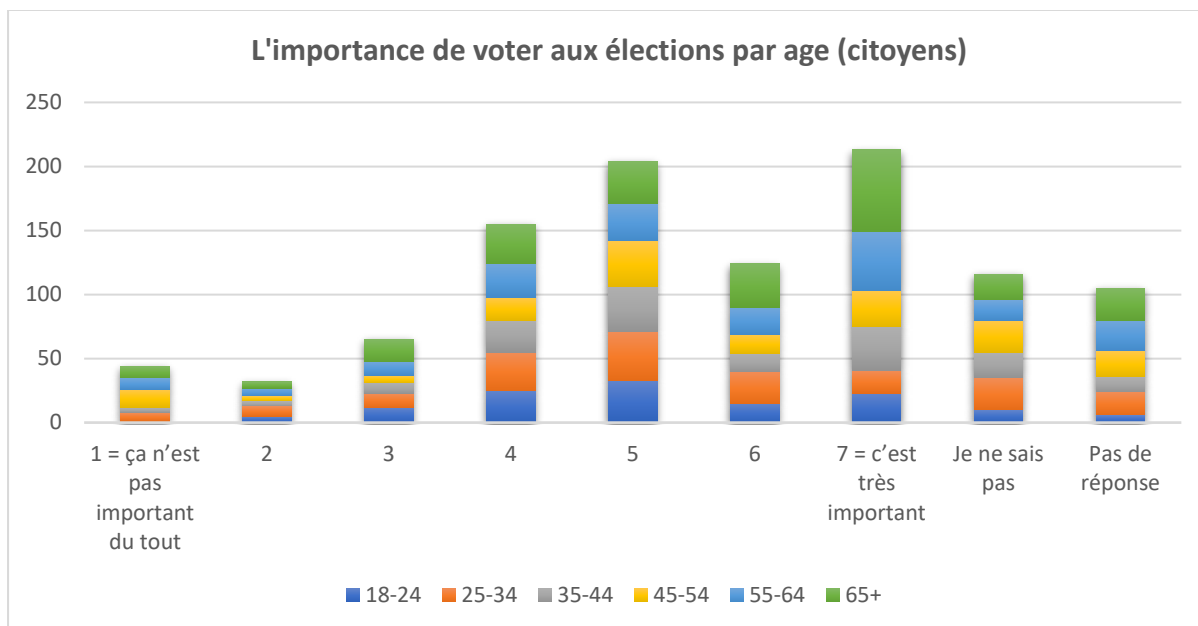
Although participation in elections and referenda is compulsory in the Grand Duchy, only 31,8% of citizens found voting as a highly important element of being a good citizen. It is also important to note the high rate of "no answer" and "I don't know" responses: 11% and 10,9%,

respectively. On the contrary, a social-normative aspect appears to hold a stronger relevance: 42,5% of citizen participants found it highly important to help people in Luxembourg in a worse situation than themselves (importance 6 and 7 on a scale of 1-7). Furthermore, while 31,7% of citizens expressed high importance for choosing products based on ethical and/or ecological considerations, only 22,2% found it highly important (6 or 7) to participate in civil society or political organisations.

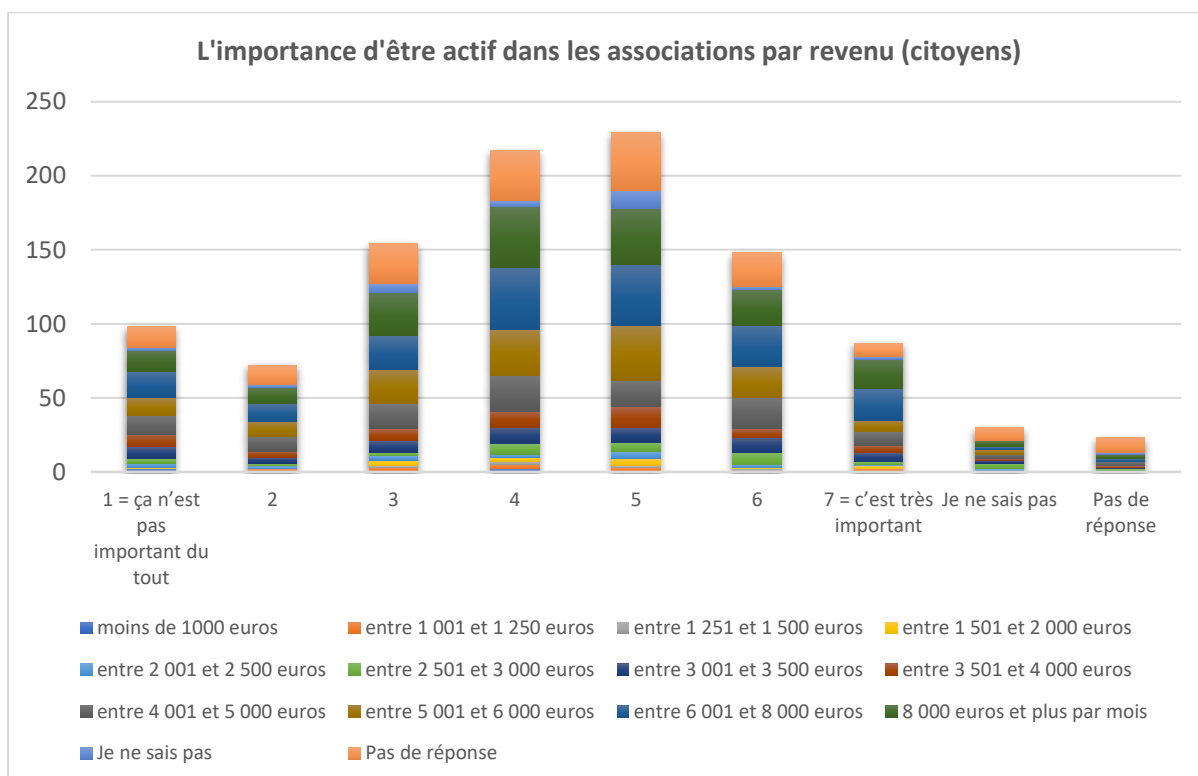


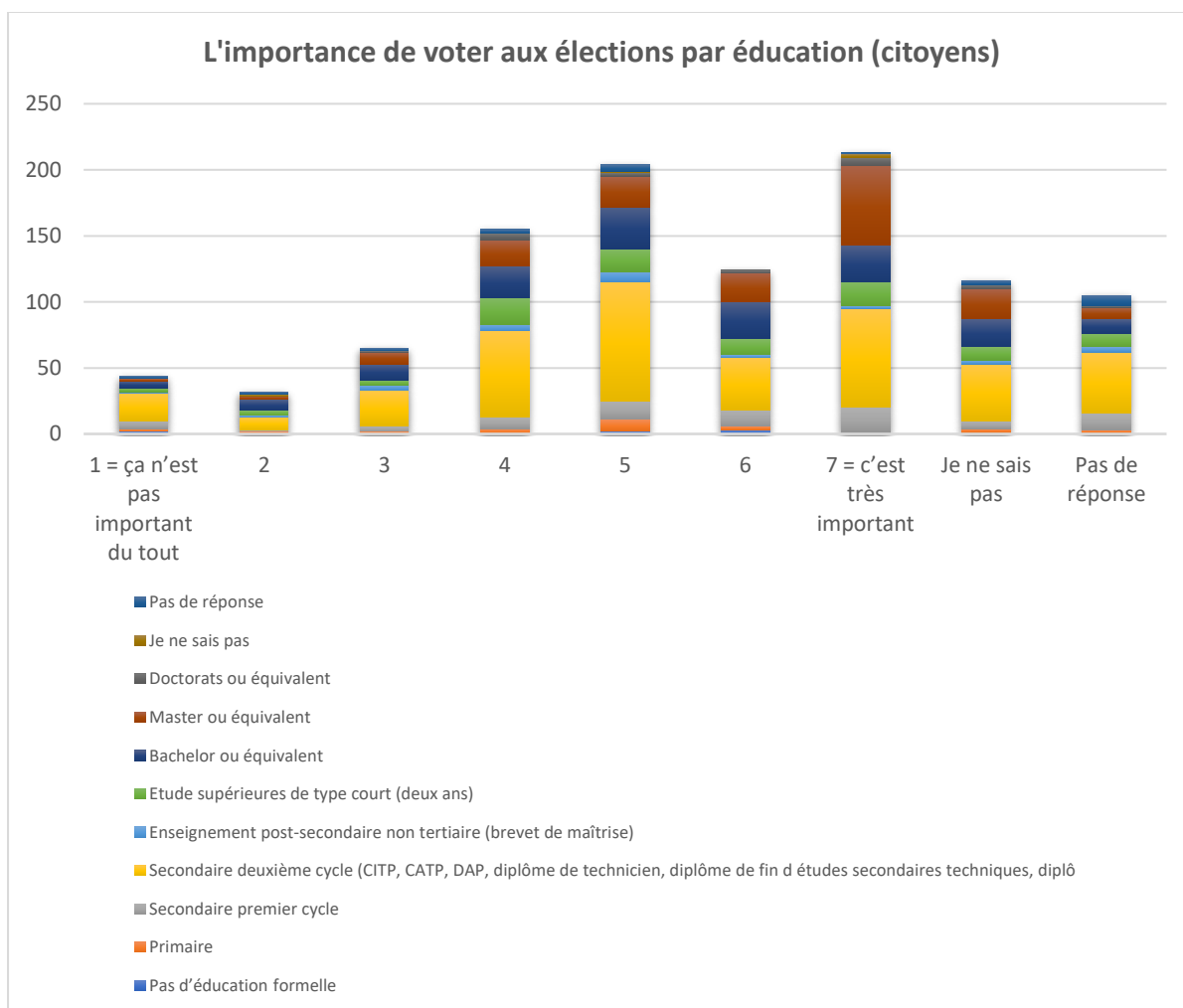
Our analysis, regarding the meaning of citizenship by age groups shows that proportionally, young people aged 25 to 34 are relatively less inclined to obey fiscal duties and obey the law. Furthermore, our findings outline the beginning of a process of distancing from voting and community life among the youngest groups.



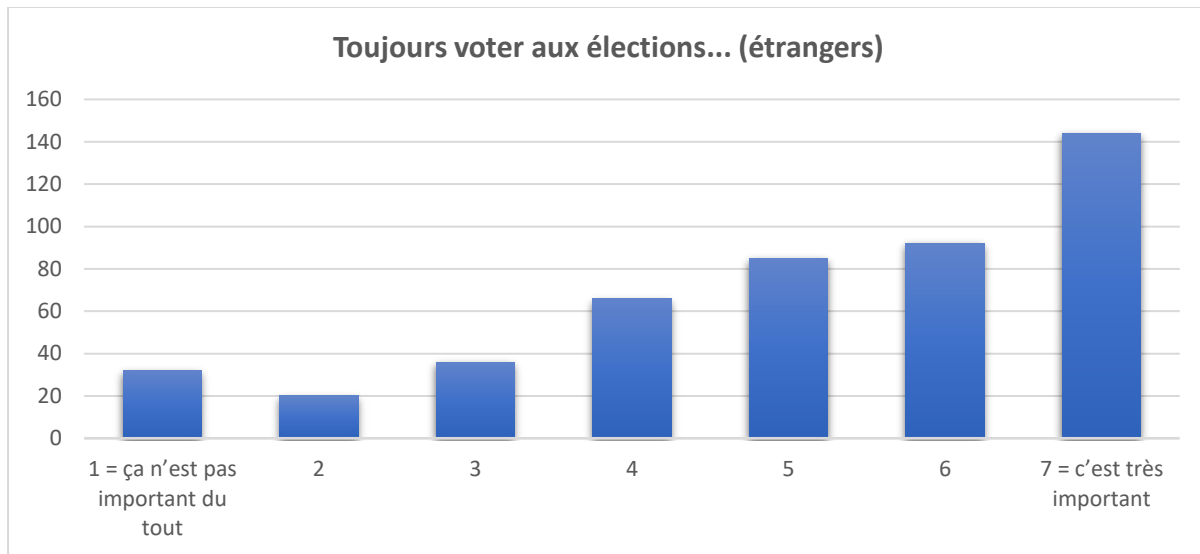


Our study did not find striking differences between various education level groups concerning what constitutes a 'good citizen'. However, we found that groups with a monthly household income below 5,000 euros are more likely to not fulfill tax obligations. Furthermore, the tendency to exercise civil rights and commitments is proportionally higher in groups with the highest monthly household income levels (6,000 euros and above).





In comparison, the cohort of foreign residents expressed slightly higher importance regarding the variables of respecting fiscal duties (58,2% answered 6 or 7 on a scale of 1-7) and obeying the law (57,8% response rate of 6 or 7). Also, the importance attributed to voting is remarkable higher in the foreigners' cohort than in the one of the citizens: 47, % found it highly important (6 or 7) to participate in elections. Compared to citizens' responses, the options of "I don't know" and "No answer" hold a very low share in the non-nationals cohort (3,2% and 1,8%, respectively), meaning that foreigner residents display more determination regarding the importance of political participation when it comes to the question of being a good citizen.

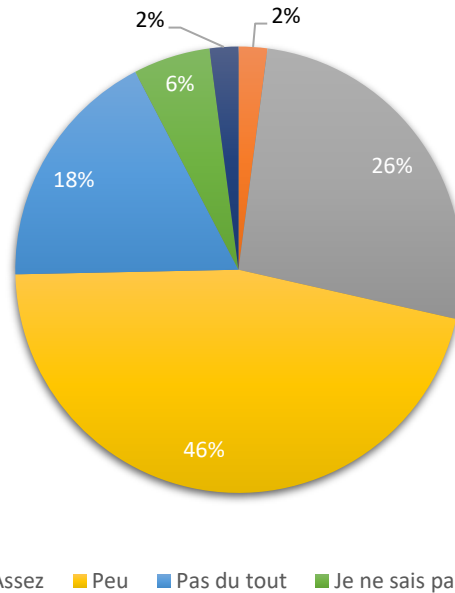


On the other hand, non-citizens expressed slightly lower importance when it comes to choosing products based on ethical/ecological considerations (27,8%) and helping those in need (38,4%). Like in the case of citizen responses, activity in civil society and political associations plays the weakest role in the concept of a good citizen for foreigner residents as well (18,6%).

IX Public Perceptions about Representation

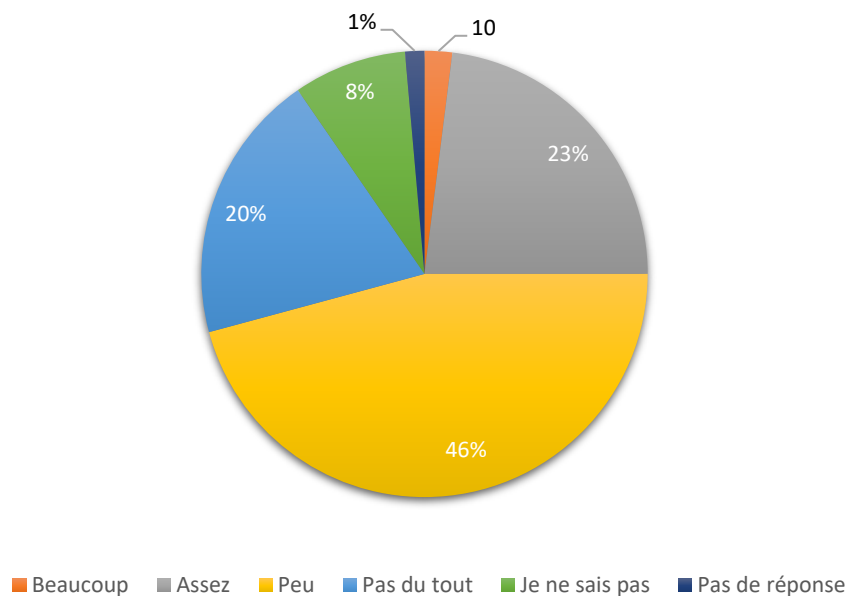
A further essential pillar of subjective democratic quality in a representative democracy is the self-perceived role of the citizens. For better understanding the dynamics of the citizens' engagement in the politics and civil society, we asked participants whether they feel that their opinion matters to political decision makers. As the chart below shows, a striking 63,8% of Luxembourg citizens reported that they do not quite or at all believe that their representatives care about what people think.

Si les individus pensent que les responsables politiques se préoccupent beaucoup, assez, peu ou pas du tout de ce que pensent les gens (citoyens)

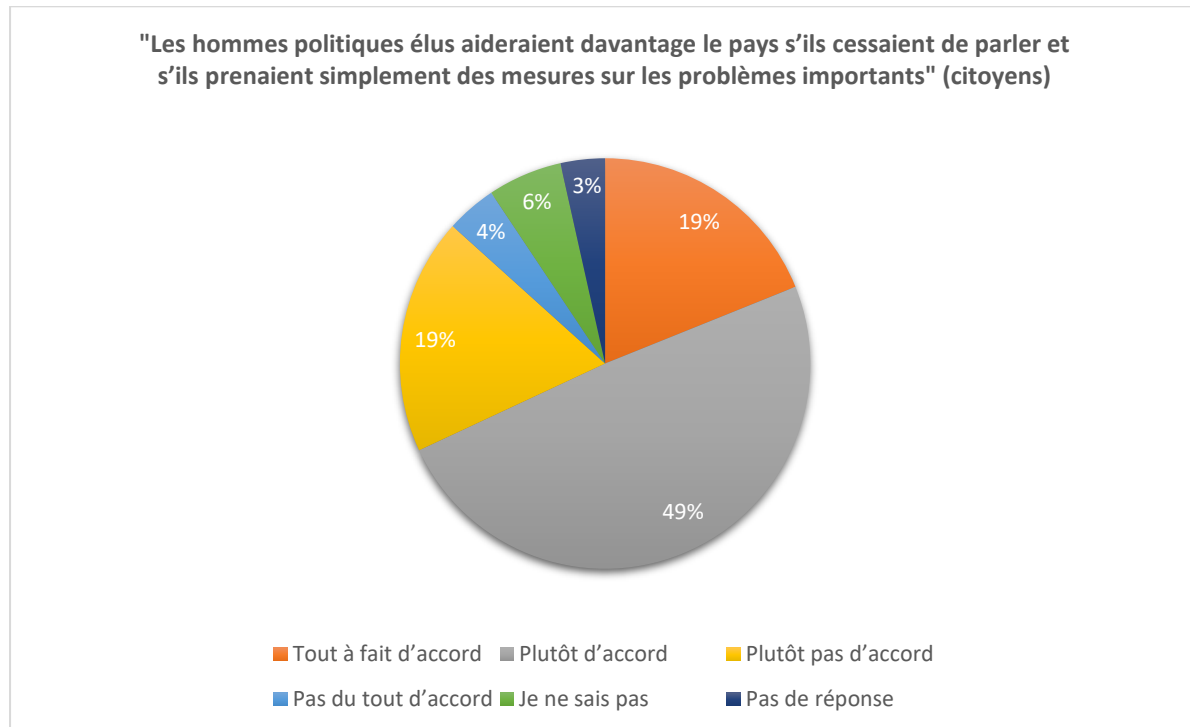


In the foreigner residents' cohort, results show worse perception regarding how much politicians care about what people say: only 25% believe that representatives are preoccupied with the opinion of the people.

Si les individus pensent que les responsables politiques se préoccupent beaucoup, assez, peu ou pas du tout de ce que pensent les gens (étrangers)



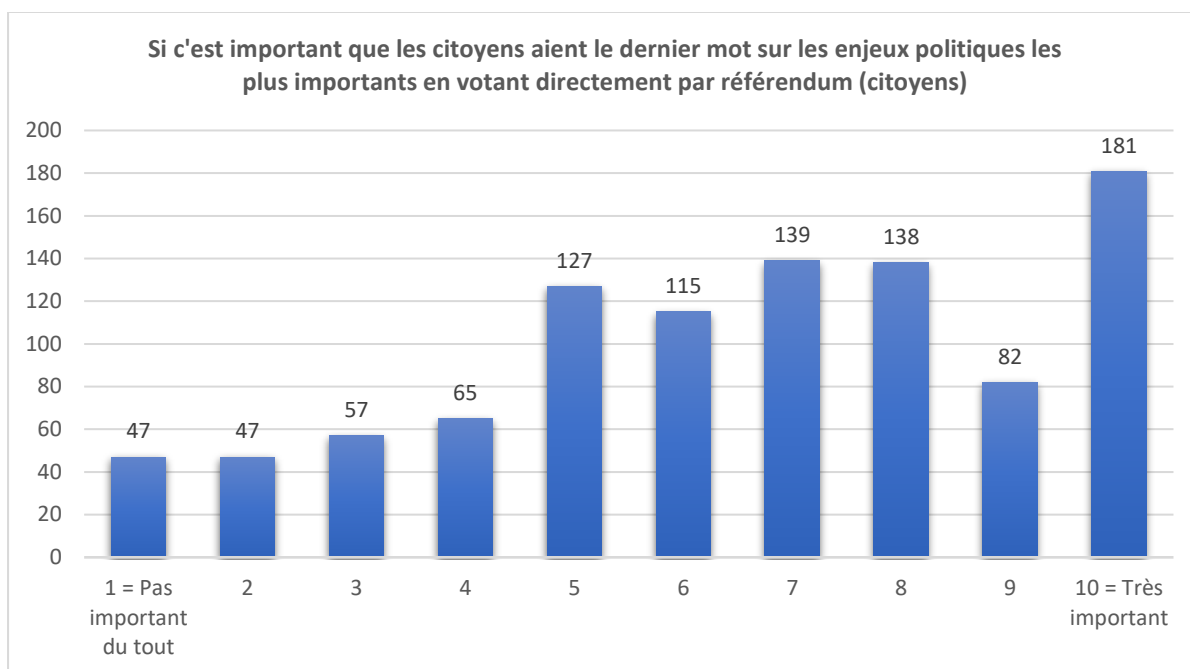
Our survey included further questions to investigate public perceptions about politicians and their role. 68,1% of Luxembourg citizen respondents completely or quite much agree with the statement that “elected politicians would be of more use to the country if they stopped talking and just took action on important issues” (see chart below).



The majority of surveyed Luxembourg citizens (54,3%) agrees that “politicians are disconnected from reality and only serve their own interests”. To the question whether “political differences between ordinary citizens and elites are greater than differences between citizens”, 64,7% of Luxembourg citizens responded in accord. 42,1% would choose to be represented by an ordinary citizen instead of politicians and 45,2% agree that “it is the people, not politicians, who should make the most important political decisions”. The majority of respondents from the Luxembourg citizen cohort (56,9%), however, didn’t agree with the proposition that “there is nothing to be proud of in their democratic system”. To the question whether politicians try to keep their campaign promises, 48% of citizens responded positively.

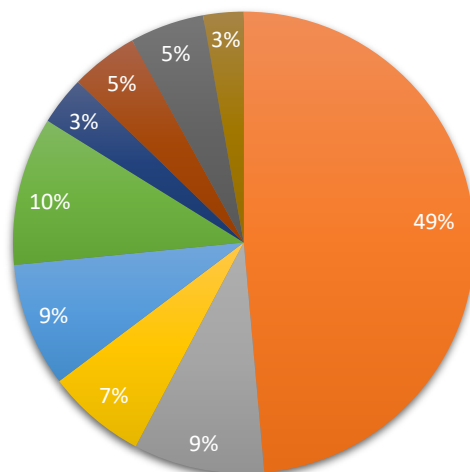
The above results are to be understood in the context of the declining levels of interest in politics and trust in the institutions of the government and the parliament, as well as the dominant feelings of distrust. The results point out the beginning of a process of public alienation from politicians and politics in general.

In the context of perceptions about representation, Polindex 2023 asked respondents about how important it is for a democracy that the citizens have the final say in the most important political questions in a form of a referendum. As the chart below shows, “answer 10” (i.e., very important) appeared to be the most popular answer among citizens. The average answer was 6,54 on a scale of 1-10, which outlines **a demand for more direct democracy.**



Polindex 2023 also proposed a list of possibilities to influence political decision making in the Grand Duchy. 48,6% of citizens mentioned voting in elections (the most popular option). The second and third most important options were being actively affiliated with a political party and protesting in the streets (10,4% and 9,2%, respectively). Discussing politics on a forum/on the internet does not appear to be important for respondents in terms of influencing politics in the country.

"Selon vous, qu'est-ce qui permet aux citoyens d'exercer le plus d'influence sur les décisions prises au Luxembourg ?"

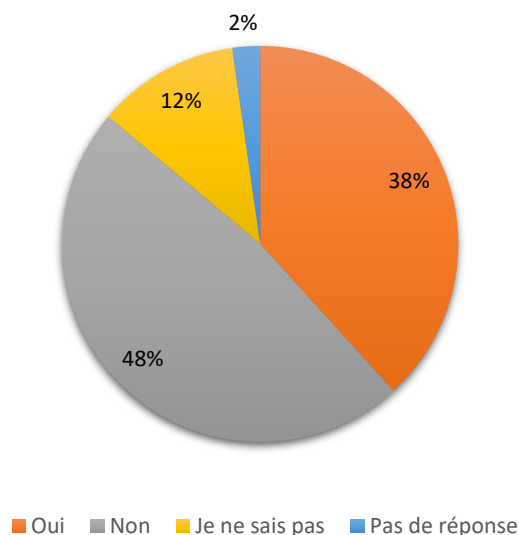


- Voter aux élections
- Boycotter des entreprises ou des produits
- Militar dans un parti politique
- Rien de tout cela
- Pas de réponse
- Manifester dans la rue
- Faire grève
- Discuter sur internet, sur un blog ou un forum
- Je ne sais pas

X Public opinion on the Participation of foreigner residents and their inclusion in the political life of the Grand Duchy

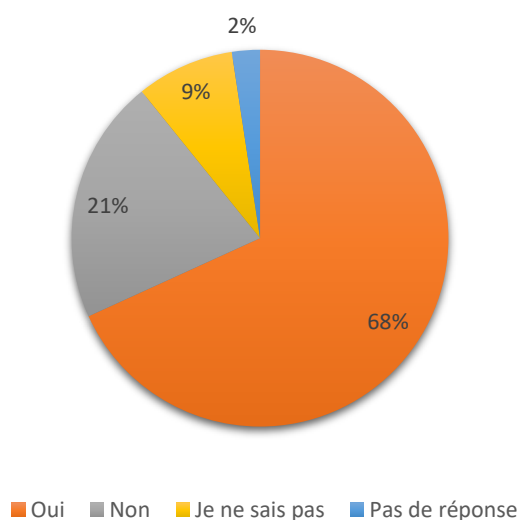
Our results show that 38,3% of citizens believe that national election rights should be extended to foreigner residents, while 47,8% believe that this political right should be reserved for only citizens. We conclude that there is a **political dissensus on this matter, representing the most pressing challenge to the quality of democracy** in Luxembourg today.

Extension du droit de vote des étrangers aux législatives (citoyens)



Polindex 2023 asked foreign residents about their opinion regarding which rights shall foreigners exercise in the Luxembourgish political system, too. **68,2% of foreigner residents believe that non-citizens should have the right to participate in all elections** in the country, including the parliamentary elections. Furthermore, 76,2% believe that non-citizen residents should also have the right to vote in referenda. Comparatively, a lower share expressed the need for foreigners to become mayors (54%), a member of the Chamber of Deputies (54,8%), a member of the Council of State (48%), and a member of the Government (51%).

"Voter à toutes les élections au Luxembourg, y compris les législatives"



Conclusive Remarks

Over the last decade, Luxembourg's social structure has transformed significantly, marked by an exponential increase in monthly disposable incomes, stronger urban concentration in the South and Centre of Luxembourg, and positive demographic dynamics primarily driven by immigration. Traditional socio-political, socioeconomic, and sociocultural divisions, once reliable for understanding the electoral anchoring of political parties in distinct constituencies, have since lost their relevance, especially since 2013. A more nuanced political landscape is emerging, characterized by enduring economic and territorial divisions that shape individual and collective perceptions of democracy, as well as the emergence of new cleavages based on psychopolitical status, generational cohort, and factors influencing social mobility for both Luxembourgers and foreign residents.

The motivations behind voting have evolved, now showing a blend of conviction-based and institutional logics. Luxembourgish citizens as a whole appear more politicized in their choices than before, as they used to justify their votes more on personal acquaintance with a candidate or a sense of closeness to a particular elected official. However, a disengagement from politics is evident among the youth, coupled with a slight decrease in trust in government institutions and Parliament. While there's a slight improvement in trust towards political parties, it remains very low, highlighting the need for quality political mediation in representative democracy. It's noteworthy, however, that public trust in Luxembourg's representative democracy institutions remains comparatively higher than in neighbouring countries, aligning more closely with patterns seen in Scandinavian states.

While overall satisfaction with the democratic process endures, distrust towards politics is now the dominant sentiment. The latter marks the initiation of a trend wherein the public increasingly distances itself from politicians and politics in a broader sense. This growing alienation is underscored by a heightened perception among the population of a disconnect between their interests and opinions and those of elected officials as well as with the rising public demand for more direct democracy. The cognitive dissonance and support between national democracy and European democracy are also strong. The roots and practice of democracy remain primarily within the nation-state and not in European Governance.

In this evolving landscape, a lack of social consensus can be outlined concerning the political roles assigned to foreigner residents. This unresolved question adds a new complexity to the socio-political discourse in Luxembourg that Luxembourgish representatives might undertake. The contours of the political landscape continue to reshape, reflecting a multifaceted interplay of socio-economic factors, generational attitudes, and transforming perceptions of democratic governance.

The state of democracy in Luxembourg, while generally satisfactory, does not preclude rethinking mechanisms of political participation. These should not be limited to consultative instruments characteristic of deliberative democracy, but rather expanded to include direct participation of Luxembourgers in the decision-making process, as envisioned in the new Constitution through legislative initiatives and/or strengthened referendum practices. The political maturity of the electorate is both stronger and more demanding.

Simultaneously, the issue of political integration of the youth and foreign residents arises anew. The political integration of the youth implies new forms of political discourse adapted to their ways of forming political opinions, leaning towards what is sometimes pretentiously called 'digital democracy'. However, it's not enough to consider technology as the sole channel for reconnecting politics with the youth. Instead, a near-anthropological reflection on the current state of politics and its relevance not just for the youth but for the entire social body in Luxembourg is needed. The growing mistrust, despite efficient administrative management of the country, must be taken seriously to avoid gradually aligning Luxembourg's qualitative democracy with that of its neighboring states. The political integration of foreign residents is also increasingly prominent as their political behaviors and values on democracy now diverge little from those of Luxembourgers. From an economic community of destiny, there effectively exists a political community, suggesting a need to rethink the contours of the political and legal criteria of Luxembourgish and European citizenship.

POLINDEX Research Partnership

Research Chair of Legislative Studies

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- 1) Parliaments and comparative constitutional innovations.
- 2) Parliament, deliberative functions, referendum, and petition practices.
- 3) Parliaments and public policy and scientific assessment offices.
- 4) Parliament and economic governance at national and European level.
- 5) Europeanization and internationalization of democratic organization standards.
- 6) Values studies and elections.

Since September 2020, in partnership with Aix-Marseille University, Babeş-Bolyai University and Université Laval, it has created the [Master en études parlementaires- Master in Legislative Studies](#), a bilingual program (English/French). Since October 2021, in partnership with the [Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie](#), which brings together more than 90 assemblies worldwide, the Chair has been developing training and research projects in the following areas: digital democracy, digitization of the Law, parliamentary diplomacy, parliamentary ethics and deontology, comparative legislation, multi-level parliamentarisms.

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